Ten Years After:

A Qualitative Study of Students' Experiences in a High School Theatre Company

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored 4 former students' perceptions of the learning associated with their involvement in a high school theatre program and the contextual factors they linked to their perceived development. The study involved 4 adult participants, 2 male and 2 female, who had participated extensively in a high school theatre company from 1996 to 2001 when they were students in a large Ontario school board. Data were collected from January to August, 2007, when the 4 former students took part in two in-depth, open-ended interviews. The focus of investigation was participant perspectives.

Data analysis revealed that the 4 participants' involvement in high school theatre produced both wide-ranging and enduring developmental benefits across personal, social, and cognitive domains. Participants achieved these benefits through interactions among 3 related contexts: (a) rehearsal and performance practices, (b) the world of the play, and (c) characteristics of the high school theatre company.

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I am deeply indebted to my family for their support throughout this process. My mother, daughters, and sons-in law were always willing to listen, advise, console, celebrate and laugh with me. My granddaughter Ali's eagerness to learn and explore kept me grounded and provided a vital reminder of the importance of educational processes.

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Table of Contents

Page

Abstract....ii
Acknowledgements....iii
List of Tables....vi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY....1
Background to the Study....3
Purpose of the Study....4
Researcher Assumptions....4
Setting of the Study....6
A Personal Story....9
Scope and Limitations of the Study....12
Outline of Subsequent Chapters....12

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW....13
The Drama/Theatre Debate....13
Adolescence and the Relevance of Participation in Theatrical Production....20
The Nature of Learning in Drama and Theatre....25
Summary of Chapter Two....42

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY....43
Participant Selection....44
Participants....46
Data Collection....48
Data Analysis....49
Establishing Credibility....52
Ethical Considerations....55
Scope and Delimitation of the Study....57
Summary of Chapter Three....57

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS....59
Personal Development....59
Summary of Personal Development, Contributing Factors, and Contexts....67
Social Development....67
Summary of Social Development, Contributing Factors, and Contexts....74
Cognitive Development....74
Summary of Cognitive Development, Contributing Factors, and Contexts....91
Unanticipated Findings....92
Summary of Unexpected Findings, Contributing Factors, and Contexts....106
Major Findings....109

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS.....111
Summary.....111
Participants' Perceptions of Development.....113
Discussion.....114
Implications for Theory.....117
Implications for Education.....120
Future Research.....121
Concluding Thoughts.....122

References.....124

Appendix A: Research Ethics Clearance.....136
Appendix B: First Interview Schedule.....137
Appendix C: Second Interview Schedule Alan.....139
Appendix D: Second Interview Schedule Luke.....141
Appendix E: Second Interview Schedule Nicola.....143
Appendix F: Second Interview Schedule Stacey.....145
Appendix G: Transcription Conventions.....146
Appendix H: Collapsed Codes.....147

List of Tables

Table Page

1: Summary of Personal Developmental Outcomes, Contributing Factors, and Contexts 68

2: Summary of Social Developmental Outcomes, Contributing Factors, and Contexts 75

3: Summary of Cognitive Developmental Outcomes, Contributing Factors, and Contexts 93

4: Summary of Attitudes and Values, Contributing Factors, and Contexts 107

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

It was a warm night in the spring of 2000, and my classroom, the high school auditorium, was full to overflowing. The 500 seats were filled, people were standing at the back, and others packed the foyer and the adjoining cafeteria, watching the proceedings on a video feed. The school board had put our school on the short list of those that might close, and the community had gathered for an information meeting with board personnel and school trustees. There were about 870 students enrolled at the school, but there were over 1,000 people in attendance that evening. As I looked around the room, I became aware of the disproportionately large number of former students present who had participated extensively in our high school theatre company's productions. During the evening, many staff members also noticed that several theatre company graduates had made the trip back to the school. At the end of the meeting, a group of these graduates told me about a conversation with a trustee who was voting to close the school. When the trustee asked them if a teacher had coached them to question him, they replied that no one had to coach them to do anything, because in the room where they were standing they had learned to examine and evaluate events and to believe that they might influence outcomes.

This was not the first time I had seen evidence of this sense of agency. High school theatre company students and graduates had been active in keeping the school open in the autumn of 1996; they had joined staff in the fall of 1997 to walk the 2-week picket line protesting the actions of the provincial government; they returned annually to help with productions and work as house crew for the Sears Drama Festival, and they had

come together to paint the corridor walls in the arts wing of the school when the school board could not afford to do so.

These drama students were obviously committed to the institution and to the drama program, but they were also able to question decisions. They seemed, too, to have developed both a strong sense of themselves and a commitment to their communities. I wondered if there could be anything about their high school drama experiences that had contributed to this multifaceted development.

During my teaching career, I hoped that my secondary students would learn more than theatre skills. I wanted them to delve beneath surface realities in order to understand the complexities of events. I hoped they would care deeply and develop the necessary cognitive, social, and personal resources to act for what they cared about. I hoped they would leave the drama program with a stronger sense of self than when they had entered it and that through their work in high school theatre they would find ways to extend and enrich their lives and relationships. I hoped they would gain the self-efficacy to deal with contemporary social issues. I hoped they would learn about human struggles hitherto unknown to them, related both to Canadian culture and history and more generally to people involved in great historical and international events. I hoped, too, that my students would be able to relate their learning to the context of their own lives. Essentially, I hoped that their experiences in high school drama would contribute to their personal, social, and cognitive development.

As a secondary school teacher involved in *cocurricular theatre* (after school programs that work in conjunction with formal curriculum to attain various learning outcomes), I worked toward multifaceted goals and witnessed student behaviour

suggesting that some of my aspirations might have been realized. As a researcher, however, I learned that little formal investigation exists of high school students' theatre experiences, particularly when productions involve published scripts and not original student work. In part to fill this void, this study is an exploration of the recalled experiences of 4 of my former high school drama students, all of whom were repeatedly involved in productions of published scripts. The purpose of the study was to explore former students' current perceptions of (a) the effects of participating in secondary school theatre on their personal, social, and cognitive development and (b) factors associated with any development they reported.

Background to the Study

Despite the fact that thousands of Ontario secondary school students are involved annually in school productions and that drama classes and theatre in education groups regularly stage student work, scant literature examines the educational value of performance at the secondary level (Schonmann, 2000), and even less addresses the topic from a Canadian perspective. Much literature discusses classroom drama that uses role play and expressive activities to achieve outcomes largely unrelated to theatrical performance or presentation. This focus is arguably the result of a theoretical polarization that began in Britain in the 1950s between practitioners and/or scholars of drama in education and practitioners and/or scholars of theatre. Drama in education pioneers Slade (1954) and Way (1967) contended not only that effective performance for an audience was beyond the capacity of most children but also that attempts to put young people on stage led to artificiality. Both Slade and Way proposed that classroom drama

provides educational benefits that participation in a theatre production does not and that, in fact, participating in a theatre production may be harmful to children.

Currently, many high schools present plays for public audiences, and drama classes regularly include theatrical presentations of students' work. However, a paucity of research examines the relationship between theatrical performance and student learning.

Purpose of the Study

This study sought to elucidate, through qualitative inquiry, 4 former high school students' perceptions of the learning associated with their involvement in a school-based theatre program.

Two broad questions guided the investigation:

1. What, if any, personal, social, and/or cognitive development did participants attribute to their participation in a high school cocurricular theatre program?
2. What contextual factors did participants associate with any development they reported?

Researcher Assumptions

This research is rooted in a constructivist approach to knowledge. Thus, it reflects my assumption that both participants and researchers are coconstructors of the knowledge that any study produces. Throughout the research process, I viewed participants as active meaning makers who use their existing knowledge to make sense of new experience and information. Participants' views and the meaning they ascribed to their experiences were the dominant focus of this study.

As a researcher and teacher, I hold assumptions about the educational value of high school theatre. My first assumption is that student participation in high school

theatre is primarily an educational experience. The quality of the theatrical product generated (the production) relies heavily on the quality of the educational process followed (rehearsals and other preparatory experiences). I believe that good theatre can be transformative for both audience and performers. I further believe that, in order to produce good theatre, students must develop the ability to investigate the human condition and consider multiple facets of humanity. To promote this development, I believe that the rehearsal process can and should fulfill traditional drama in education goals of both a change in cognitive understanding (Bolton, 1984) and the personal growth of individuals (Way, 1967).

My second assumption is that adolescence is a period marked by an individual's search for identity and an understanding of the relationship of self to the world. As the transition to adulthood, adolescence is a time when students begin to develop abstract and critical thought processes. Because the subject matter of drama and theatre is the human condition, I believe that the experiences students have in studying these areas might be important in enhancing adolescents' abstract and critical awareness of human behaviour.

My third assumption is that the nature of learning in drama and theatre is not only cognitive but also social, embodied, and aesthetic. Cognitively, students learn through multiple modes of knowing while making great use of imagination and engaging in critical inquiry. Socially, students make meanings through interactions with each other and their teacher. Physically, because performers or participants embody fictional characters or roles, sensations and behaviours become central to the construction of meaning. Aesthetically, students not only learn to construct and express knowledge

about emotions and ideas in physical and vocal form but also learn that abstract ideas can be cast in concrete modes.

My final assumption is that learning through drama and theatre is achieved both through engaging in role-based activities and creating and performing a character. I believe that this performative epistemology, wherein performance is an embodied, empathic way of knowing and "deeply sensing the other" (Conquergood, 1985, p. 3), underlies learning in drama and theatre.

Setting of the Study

Greenwood Secondary School (a pseudonym), in a large school board in southern Ontario, is a composite secondary school in the downtown core of a midsized city. With families from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, the community is very supportive of the school. In the 1990s, the years investigated in this study, approximately 850 students attended the school, with 80% taking advanced level courses and 20% taking general level courses.

The Drama Program

From 1992 to 2001, the years spanning the high school attendance of study participants, core drama courses existed from grades 9 to OAC (Ontario Academic Credit). Additional focus courses included grade 11 technical theatre, grade 11 and 12 music theatre, and grade 12 playwriting and directing. Annually, the school supported 11 to 12 sections of drama, taught by qualified drama teachers. The core program focused on *process drama* (non-performance-based classroom drama) in grades 9 and 10, script work and acting in grades 11 and 12, and theatre history in OAC. The focus, whether in-class or cocurricular, was always on dramatic content and on using dramatic form and

language to explore, interpret, and communicate content as it illuminated the human condition.

The Cocurricular Program

The cocurricular program at Greenwood was an important component of the drama program. Each November the school produced a musical for which students auditioned and/or indicated an interest in production. Although not everyone was cast or obtained the crew position he or she desired, all interested students were invited to participate in some aspect of the production.

The school also produced an annual one-act play entry for the Sears Drama Festival. During the years discussed in this study, these plays were professionally scripted, although for several years prior to that time, they had been student written. Staff and students co-operatively chose the scripts, and students were expected to provide leadership in all production areas. As with the musicals, anyone who indicated an interest was invited to participate in the production. Each year students also involved themselves in additional drama classes and cocurricular drama projects.

The 4 students involved in this study participated in six professionally scripted cocurricular productions under my direction. Students and teacher collaborated to select the scripts, and the productions were entered into the Sears Ontario Drama Festival. The plays were not drawn from the traditional high school Western canon. Rather, they delved into contemporary historical issues and events and explored common themes of injustice and inequity. Scripts dealt with serious content outside the lived experience of the students: (a) the Romanian Revolution, (b) the plight of the Disappeared in Argentina, (c) the lobotomy of Frances Farmer, (d) the mysterious death of Canadian artist Tom

Thomson, (e) the legend of the Donnelly family of Lucan, Ontario, and (f) Canadians in the Great Depression. The first play examined the roots and effects of the 1989 Romanian Revolution that deposed and executed the communist dictators Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu and explored themes of postrevolutionary turmoil, social collapse, and the difficulty of defining freedom. The second play investigated the 30,000 "disappeared" who were abducted by the military dictatorship in Argentina in the 1970s and 1980s and looked at themes of human resilience and determination, family, political persecution, and community. The third play looked into the persecution of American film star Frances Farmer in the 1930s and 1940s for her suspected communist connections and considered the struggle to maintain individuality in the face of political persecution, media images, and public expectations of women. The fourth play probed the uncertain facts of Canadian artist Tom Thomson's life and death in 1919 and explored the nature of art and the connection of the artist's work to both the general public and personal friends and neighbours. The fifth play studied the 1880 massacre of the Donnelly family by the God-fearing residents of a small town in Ontario and dealt with themes of religious prejudice, injustice, family, and the making of myth and legend. The sixth play investigated the experience of working-class Canadians during the Great Depression of the 1930s and explored themes of hardship, resilience, survival, and community.

The Rehearsal and Performance Process

Work on each of the six productions discussed in this study followed a similar process. The normal 7-week rehearsal period, held in the school auditorium, consisted of three phases: exploration, interpretation, and communication. Initial rehearsals involved reading the play, discussing its background, and improvising around the script's content

and context. The students and I would then investigate each scene, finding images, relationships, motivations, and a shape for the production. This was an exploratory process accomplished simultaneously with the emerging set design. During the phases of exploration and interpretation, all productions involved considerable process drama work, through which we attempted to build volume and "deepen the drama" (Morgan & Saxton, 1987, p. 141). Throughout the entire rehearsal process, students undertook extensive research (including reading, field trips, and interviews) on the background, culture, and characters of the play. During the final phase of rehearsals, sensory work and voice and movement exercises based on research material improved communication techniques. Within a specific production concept, students designed and realized sets, costumes, props, lighting, and sound. Six to eight performances of each production occurred in the school auditorium. We met after each performance for reflection. Following the final performance, we met to reflect and celebrate.

A Personal Story

In 1996 I had been teaching at Greenwood for 25 years. I started my career as a second-language teacher who helped the theatre arts teachers as choreographer or director of cocurricular productions. At that time I had experience as a director, but no formal training in teaching theatre or drama. I had been heavily involved in forming my university theatre company and had worked there with local professionals as well as students. When asked to teach drama in my second year of teaching, I began to take formal courses and workshops wherever I could find them. Initially, these courses focused on various forms of acting, directing, playwriting, and production work.

During this time, however, the revolutionary work of Brian Way (1967) came to the forefront of drama education, and our drama staff wrestled with the newfound tension between theatrical performance and using drama for students' personal development. I found myself situated between two senior teachers on my school staff: one, a follower of Way's developmental drama philosophy; the other, a theatre artist. Thus began a tension and dichotomy that I lived with throughout my teaching career. It was a polarized argument that I never really understood and that I certainly did not buy into. Those who focused on the performative concerns of theatre seemed to assume that the personal and social developmental aims of drama were not relevant to the rehearsal process. Conversely, others seemed to assume that learning through drama could occur from any point of departure or source except from a script to be performed for an audience. It seemed to me that theorists and practitioners spent more time arguing with one another than they did either advocating for educational outcomes inherent in both forms or in drawing from one another's unique resources. I have always viewed drama and theatre as parts of the same whole and their various activities and forms as existing along a continuum. I have always believed that a strong theatrical performance entails a great deal of personal development achieved through the process of examining human struggles.

Eventually, I qualified as a dramatic arts teacher through Ontario Ministry of Education additional qualifications courses. My teachers, including Cecily O'Neill, David Booth, and John MacLeod, introduced me to a range of drama strategies as well as to the theories of Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton. In class, I learned by working through diverse strategies and theories with a variety of other elementary and secondary

teachers. Throughout my career, I have continued to take process drama courses and workshops as well as theatre-based classes and workshops. For years, I worked on the CODE (Council on Drama and Dance in Education, currently Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators) Management Board, during which time I crafted CODE's response to the Ontario government's Common Curriculum and worked on CODE's first advisory document for the new Ontario Curriculum in 1998. Both of these experiences solidified my belief in the value of dramatic arts as a process, a precise teaching instrument, and an instrument of personal and social development.

At the same time, I volunteered several years for Theatre Ontario, a nonprofit service organization for theatre-related activities, first as a member of their education committee and later as chair of that committee and member of the Management Board. In this capacity, I interacted with teachers from both secondary and tertiary levels, members of community theatres, and theatre professionals. I also served as the district representative to the Sears Drama Festival and participated on provincial committees with teachers who directed student theatre. These experiences solidified my belief in the unified value of drama and theatre as common educational processes, precise teaching instruments, and avenues of personal and social development.

Today, however, some of my colleagues still insist that drama and theatre are two different activities and that working on a theatrical production undermines the human development that nonperformative drama can bring about. I cannot ignore the persistent drama/theatre debate; I need to relate it to my lived experience. I also believe that the inclusion of student perspectives can illuminate educational theory. Thus, I conducted this study to answer the questions:

1. What, if any, personal, social, and/or cognitive development did participants attribute to their participation in a high school cocurricular theatre program?

2. What contextual factors did participants associate with any development they reported?

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study was delimited to 4 former students who had been heavily involved in the drama program of one school in southern Ontario. Data were collected within 8 months, primarily through in depth, open-ended interviews. My research journal served as a supplemental data source. The study used solely qualitative techniques. The focus of investigation was participant perspectives.

Outline of Subsequent Chapters

Chapter Two provides a literature review, examining (a) drama-based and theatre-based learning, (b) developmental characteristics of adolescents and the ways in which drama and theatre experiences may influence adolescent development, and (c) the multifaceted nature of learning in drama and theatre. Chapter Three explains the methodology used for the study. Chapter Four discusses findings of the study. Finally, Chapter Five provides a summary of the research, a discussion of the findings, implications for theory and for education, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is presented in three sections, each addressing an area of theoretical significance to the study. The first section introduces the drama/theatre debate. The second section outlines developmental characteristics of adolescents and the ways in which drama and theatre experiences may influence this development. The third section investigates the multifaceted nature of learning in drama and theatre.

The Drama/Theatre Debate

"The separation of drama and theatre has been the most persistent debate in the whole history of dramatic arts in education" (McLeod, 1989). For over 40 years, drama in education scholars have drawn attention to the differences between classroom drama and theatrical performance. The dichotomy centres on the idea that drama aims to provide an experience for its participants, whereas theatre aims to provide an experience for its audience.

Pioneers in educational drama were very clear on the differences between drama and theatre. Slade (1954) insisted that young children should not work with scripts, should not work on a traditional stage, and should not perform for an audience. Although Slade conceded that students over the age of 18 might benefit from taking part in theatrical performance, many of his followers believed that Slade was completely antiperformance and antitheatre (Bolton, 1984), and this belief has continued to affect theory and practice at all educational levels.

Slade's follower, Way (1967), maintained that drama's educative purpose is personal development. Like Slade, Way proposed that children should not perform for an audience and further argued that dramatic exercises should be undertaken only to develop

students' personal resources. These included concentration; imagination; sensory, physical, and spatial awareness; a feeling for language; emotional mastery; consciousness of self; improvisational skill; and social awareness and the ability to work in a group. Way cautioned teachers to avoid using the "entirely different activity called theatre," as it contains "some potential for undermining one or another of the basic values of drama as part of the development of people" (p. 273). Both Slade and Way contended that theatrical communication to an audience is beyond the capacity of most youngsters and that childhood performance training results in artificiality. Although Way conceded that a secondary drama program might include a polished performance of part of a scripted play, he provided no insight on how one should prepare such a performance to maximize the educational value for participants.

The BBC broadcast of *Three Looms Waiting* (Smedley, 1972) brought the groundbreaking work of Dorothy Heathcote to the forefront of drama in education. Heathcote's monumental and defining contribution to the field centred on the idea of drama as a teaching instrument that could be used to instruct students in a variety of content areas across the curriculum (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984). Heathcote's early work, on which much current drama in education practice is based, involved students "living through" (Davis, 2005, p. 174) improvised drama based on a variety of sources. Heathcote articulated a new vision for classroom drama.

> I define educational drama as being anything which involves people in active role-taking situations in which attitudes, not characters, are its chief concern, lived at life-rate (that is discovery at this moment, not memory based) and obeying the natural laws of the medium. I regard these laws as being: a willing suspension of

> disbelief; agreement to pretence; employing all past experiences available to the group at the present moment and any conjecture of imagination they are capable of, in an attempt to create a living, moving picture of life, which aims at surprise and discovery for participants rather than for any onlookers. The scope of this is to be defined by story-line and theme, so that the problem with which they grapple is clearly defined. I maintain that problem-solving is the basis of learning and maturation. (Heathcote, 1984c, pp. 61-62)

The work of Heathcote and her contemporaries, Gavin Bolton and Norah Morgan, emphasized this instrumental use of drama, particularly in producing a change in understanding for students. Heathcote stressed that work in role is helpful in teaching and learning diverse subjects and is not to be considered preparation for theatrical performance (Bolton, 1984; Johnson & O'Neill, 1984). Nonperformative classroom drama, more recently labelled process drama (O'Neill, 1995), emphasizes participants' personal growth through an exploration of issues within an improvised dramatic experience. Process drama "proceeds without a script, its outcome is unpredictable, it lacks a separate audience, and the experience is impossible to replicate exactly" (p. xiii). Proponents on this side of the drama/theatre dispute emphasize the intrinsically instructive nature of the dramatic experience itself, and many argue further that performance training has no place whatsoever in school (Hundert, 1996, p. 19). At the other extreme of the drama/theatre debate, Hornbrook (1995) lamented process drama's lack of focus on the "legitimate business of drama" (p. 83), which he described as making, performing, and watching plays. He advocated a program that enhances students' theatrical skills and understanding and exposes them to the challenges of

dramatic activity beyond nonperformative role-play and improvisation. While acknowledging that process drama has value as an aspect of drama, Hornbrook argued (a) that there is a lack of empirical evidence to substantiate the far-reaching claims of process drama, (b) that the process drama approach is not relevant to the schools he observes, and (c) that process drama could never be its own subject in school, as it has "no body of knowledge, skills or understandings which are specific to it" (p. 85).

In an intermediary position, Schonmann (2005) called for a balance between the instrumental and artistic-aesthetic functions of drama and theatre work in education. Wary of an overfocus on utilitarian aspects of drama and theatre education that ignores the artistic dimensions of the field, she argued that "participating in drama and theatre education is firstly learning to use the language of the theatrical art and achieving aesthetic modes of knowing" (p. 38). Accordingly, drama and theatre education requires an artistic/aesthetic foundation, and its instrumental functions arise from that base.

Similarities between the concepts of drama and theatre far outweigh differences. Both rely on impersonation and the suspension of disbelief to investigate the common subject matter of human events and issues. Both employ elements of focus, tension, contrast, and symbols, and components of plot, character, dialogue, action, time, and place (Hundert, 1996, p. 25). Both treat time and place symbolically, with the human being as the central medium of expression. Both depend on the participant's ability to develop roles and characters within the framework of a fictional situation. Both rely on voice and physical gestures as primary modes of expression (Schonmann, 2005). Both seek the simple action of embodying meaning (Bolton, 1986), and both rely on the process of creating.

Improvisation, for example, is a technique commonly used in both educational drama and theatre as a means of enhancing teamwork, creative thinking, and a sense of agency. In essence, the drama education theories and practices of Way resonate with Stanislavski's work on theatrical performance training (Bolton, 1984). Stanislavski's "system," arguably the most influential actor training method of the 20th century, sought to develop imagination, concentration of attention, use of tempo-rhythm, investigation of given circumstances, and belief in the "magic if" (Moore, 1974). Although Way insisted that his exercises develop individuals, they also develop sensitive and responsive actors. Dorothy Heathcote (1984b) herself states:

> Theatre and drama spring from the same roots – the need of people to role-play, to enable them to measure themselves and their own experiences and viewpoints against those of others, not only in order to see where they are different, but also to discover wherein they are alike, so that they can achieve a sense of belonging, especially in those areas of living which are not capable of being communicated by words alone. (p. 56)

In the past decade, the drama/theatre dichotomy has somewhat abated (Schonmann, 2005); including both orientations in the secondary curriculum is becoming more common. In Britain, for example, a sample of secondary school drama specialists found the traditional distinction between drama and theatre obstructive, preferring the concept of a single art form with a wide variety of applications (Cockett, 1996). All considered the core of their work as teaching the aims of both drama and theatre: how to work with a group, listen and co-operate, communicate, create a character, build dramatic situations with tension and suspense, understand irony and subtext, and structure

sequence and plot. Many referred to the importance of drama as a way of thinking, developing and communicating ideas, and connecting pupils' learning with their ability to manipulate theatrical form. Teacher comments repeatedly stressed the broad aim of promoting learning through the art form of theatre. The conceptual separation of drama (process focused) and theatre (product focused) was not relevant to their work with students.

According to the teachers in Cockett's (1996) study, student learning in drama is both collaborative and public. It involves a process of discovering what to say, selecting and refining important details, and then communicating a product to others. The quality of the product is integrally related to the quality of the students' learning process. Furthermore, the students' learning in drama entails both the development of a skill set and an understanding of the language of theatre. As a shared language, notions of theatrical quality form part of public discourse; the learning is also a shared process. For students, satisfaction comes from working on a project and creating something worthy of pride. But then it is also important to share the work with others.

In the United States, secondary school teachers have suggested that an impending performance raises the stakes for students to take their work in drama seriously (Chapman, 2005, p. 99), and that this seriousness occurs because the pressure of the product motivates students to commit themselves thoughtfully to the dramatic process. Thus, a focus on future product helps generate an effective and creative process.

In Ontario, Hundert (1996) treated drama and theatre as mutually reinforcing components of secondary students' learning experiences. Through dramatic exploration, students created an original work of theatre. Through the medium of theatre, they

engaged in the types of activities endorsed by drama in education scholars. Hundert's study was conducted in a classroom, using qualitative methods to explore the substance and conditions of teaching and learning in drama. Unlike the study presented in this thesis, which explores learning attained from working on published scripts in a cocurricular company, Hundert's work investigated the nature of the learning in a drama classroom wherein students created, rehearsed, and performed an original script. Hundert's study researched the students' perspectives and examined "the possibility of drama-based learning in a theatre-based course" (p. 4).

Focusing on the substance and conditions of learning in a specific drama course, Hundert (1996) explored the nature of learning in a grade 12 children's theatre class and the factors that led to that learning. Hundert's case study examined the experiences of 6 diverse students enrolled in a senior level children's theatre course in which they created and produced an original play for children. Her findings underline the interrelatedness of students, teacher, peers, classroom culture, assessment, and the structure of learning activities in achieving learning outcomes. Although the specific knowledge gained by participants was both idiosyncratic and diverse, most gained increased awareness in three generally acknowledged aspects of learning in drama: learning about drama, learning to do drama, and learning through drama. Students learned *about* dramatic structure, character and plot development, and about the daily realities of life in the theatre. What they learned *to do* was develop a script through improvisation, peer coaching, and editing; concentrate in front of an audience; give and receive constructive criticism; and perform various production duties. *Through* drama, they learned skills of social interaction, leadership, and reflective self-evaluation, and they developed a sense of

responsibility and self-direction. The study concluded that the careful structuring of learning activities, ongoing multifaceted assessment processes, and the functioning of students within their assigned working groups were cornerstones of the learning achieved in the children's theatre environment. Hundert's findings focus on the knowledge constructed and articulated by the students themselves as well as on student perceptions of the effectiveness of the processes implemented to achieve educational outcomes.

Adolescence and the Relevance of Participation in Theatrical Production

Adolescence is a time of forming identity, making the transition from childhood to adulthood, and defining oneself in relation to the world. Both the search for self and the establishment of a clear and sustainable ego identity are major concerns in the traditional writings on adolescent psychology (Erikson, 1968; Kaplan, 1984). Scholars have identified adolescence as a period of intense evaluation and revision of oneself in relationship to others (Chapman, 2000), and the formation of an identity is considered the crucial task of adolescence (Erikson). Many psychologists define adolescence as a period of finding identity balance and separation between the self and other (Erikson; Hine, 1999). In its simplest form, this quest for identity takes shape in such questions as "Who am I?" "Who do I want to be?" and "How am I different from others?" (Roediger, Capaldi, Paris, & Polivy, 1991, p. 368).

Adolescence marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. A major assumption underlying developmental research is that, as human beings develop, they become more and more sophisticated (Chapman, 2005, pp. 31-32). Moreover, there is a widely shared agreement amongst observers of adolescence that establishing a sense of

identity during this period helps to initiate a successful transition to adulthood (Burton, 2002).

During adolescence, young people define themselves in relation to the world and are increasingly able to think about the world abstractly and with complexity. Piaget (1950) proposed that between the ages of 11 and 15, individuals are in the final stages of transition from concrete to abstract thought. They progressively develop an ability to conceptualize hypothetical situations and anticipate various consequences of actions (Lemlech, 1998). Kohlberg, in his "stage theory" of moral development, postulated that adolescence is the time when individuals develop a subjective sense of morality and are able to take multiple perspectives into account when making ethical judgments (Chapman, 2005, p. 31).

Progression to abstract and complex thought, the development of an ethical sense, and growing consideration of self in relation to others are important features of adolescence; they are also capacities required for critical engagement with the content and processes of theatrical rehearsal and performance. Studies of adolescents' experiences in theatre, many outside the education system, have revealed that all three of these developmental signposts are commonly addressed. Establishing a sense of positive identity is a key finding, in that the most frequently reported effects of youth theatre participation were improved confidence, self-acceptance, and self-expression (Conrad, 2004; Hughes & Wilson, 2004; Murray, 2000). A number of teenagers identified the enhancement of self-awareness and self-esteem as the most important personal outcome and the primary reason they were so passionate about community-based youth theatre (Burton, 2002).

Research demonstrates that youth theatre provides an environment that supports young people in making a positive transition to adulthood. Teenagers involved in youth theatre reported an increase in their ability to make friends, find happiness, and deal with negative experiences (Hughes & Wilson, 2004). In one study (Burton, 2002), the outcome of the youth theatre experience for older teenagers was a rite of passage asserting and celebrating the achievement of adulthood, while for younger group members, the experience began their transition from dependence and acceptance of the adult world to a sense of autonomous self. Participants valued their youth theatre experience as a means of developing skills related to employment and peer relationships. They identified the development of talent, relevant not only to performance skills but also to increasing mastery in their daily lives, as an important outcome of youth theatre participation. Some believed that youth theatre made them more competent because it added excitement, energy, and purpose to their lives; others identified the skills they were acquiring as transferable to other aspects of their experience.

Scholars have identified adolescence as a time when young people are progressively able to think abstractly, complexly, and ethically, and a time when they are able to take multiple perspectives into account. Certainly, participants in youth theatre reported an increase in open-mindedness (Hughes & Wilson, 2004). In Burton's (2002) study, older adolescents used a youth theatre project, the creation and performance of *Millenium*, to criticize social and political realities and purposefully communicate their opinions to an audience. Conversely, younger students who rehearsed and performed a version of *Faust* developed a degree of enculturation, as *Faust* came to affirm for them the cultural significance of the play and its underlying moral code.

It is important to note the differences in the two groups involved in Burton's (2002) study. Whereas the older group used their youth theatre experience to investigate and critique the existing culture, the younger members developed a sense of ownership of their culture. An issue worthy of further exploration is whether this important difference is a result of different developmental stages or the form of the project (the creation of an original script versus the rehearsal and performance of a classic work of theatre and a cultural icon) or a combination of the two factors.

The scant literature that discusses the effects of school-based theatrical performance on adolescent development has a focus somewhat different from that of the community-based youth theatre studies. Within these studies, however, some literature acknowledges the importance of both drama and theatre in adolescent identity development and in the understanding of self in relationship to the world. Chapman (2000) noted (a) that after performing in a school production, actors may display stronger self-esteem and (b) that performing certain characters can influence the way people reflect on their individual identities and actions. Chapman argued that participating in theatre requires students to reflect on their identities in relation to others and that play production offers students the opportunity to perform various identities in search of their own. Cruise and Sewell (2000), in observing high school drama students involved in a theatre production of *The Boys Next Door*, noted that various high school actors not only identified closely with a character but also discovered submergent traits in themselves that allowed them to develop fictional characteristics different from their own. The students discovered redeeming qualities in characters nothing like themselves and experienced a growth in self-awareness. The authors proposed that role-taking involves a

process of delineating self from others and that, through the process of adopting the roles of others, an individual's conception of his or her own personal roles expands. They discussed the *Kellyan* notion (Kelly, 1955) that role is a tool for both understanding the world and promoting personal growth and change.

The thrust of literature drawn from school-based experiences describes the power of theatre either to critique political and social realities or to embrace and support the dominant culture. Some argue that the traditional high school play upholds mainstream culture and does not reflect the contemporary reality of a multicultural society. These theorists recommend the use of nonmainstream theatre practices, such as devised drama and racially blind casting (Chapman, 2000, 2005). Chapman (2005) maintained that, at its best, a high school theatre program challenges both participants and audience to engage critically and aesthetically with the performance and that both curriculum and play selection offer opportunities for students to solidify or challenge their beliefs about their own and others' identities. Chapman investigated 4 teachers who have found ways to encourage this critical and aesthetic engagement. These teachers asserted that play selection and rehearsal techniques affect students' self-perceptions as artists and individuals and that quality artistic endeavour must be willing to engage with difficult, and sometimes risky, questions. Consequently, these teachers seek plays that will lead students to a level beyond mainstream values, challenge them in terms of their own understanding of theatre, and move them away from material commonly performed in high schools.

The teachers in Chapman's study suggested several methods for encouraging students' critical engagement with the text. Jo Beth Gonzalez, a participant in

Chapman's study, argued that, through nontraditional casting and design choices, a traditional play can critically engage an audience rather than fulfill its expectations. According to Gonzalez, teachers can use the traditional Western canon to facilitate students' critical engagement in contemporary social and moral issues (Chapman, 2005, p. 115). Gonzalez (1999) earlier explained that in rehearsing any play, traditional or not, students might discuss aspects of the work that remain relevant and seek significance in aspects of the work that initially seem not so relevant.

Chapman (2005) highlighted the important role that teachers play in facilitating theatre-related educational experiences for adolescent students. The teachers in her study contended that today's students must define themselves in relation to systems of power before those systems can change; they reflect this belief in their play selection and rehearsal processes. The teachers furthermore suggested not only that performance for an audience powerfully motivates students' work but also that theatre has the potential to teach beyond its discipline-based skills. These teachers are concerned with both the product and process of directing a school play. Although expected to produce plays that parents and the community can view without offense, they make choices that push the boundaries of "safe" material, and they believe that play choices matter (p. 195).

The Nature of Learning in Drama and Theatre

This section of the literature review describes the complex nature of learning in drama and theatre. It first discusses the educational tenets of process drama. Second, it describes the constructivist orientation of learning in drama and theatre. It then more specifically discusses social, physical, aesthetic, and cognitive aspects of learning in

drama and theatre. Finally, it examines role-play and characterization, the primary forms of enactment required for learning in drama to occur.

Process Drama

Much current literature on classroom drama is devoted to process drama, an orientation that identifies the educational value of dramatic arts as the process of engaging in drama activities, through which students should grasp concepts, understand complex issues, solve problems, and work creatively and co-operatively (O'Neill & Lambert, 1983). Heathcote and Bolton (1995) considered personal involvement the key to drama in education. They emphasized the necessity of bringing students' enacted experience to a point where it can provoke reflection. In process drama, through active identification with imagined roles and situations, students can learn to explore issues, events, and relationships. The knowledge gained in process drama activities is experiential and contextualized, as students engage cognitively, kinesthetically, and emotionally to construct and negotiate meaning (Bowell & Heap, 2001, p. 28). Fictional worlds (O'Neill, 1995) are created and maintained wherein participants explore personal connections to themes and issues. There is no script to provide outcomes, answers, or solutions. The actions taken are determined by the participants, who make choices within the fictional world based on their lived experiences (Weltsek-Medina, 2008, p. 3). Process drama leads to a greater understanding of the nature of an experience through direct engagement with the event and a range of role-taking opportunities (O'Neill, p. xiv).

Scholars have noted that process drama contributes to a range of personal and interpersonal competencies. Link (1992) used process drama strategies to help

elementary school children build emotional awareness and then communicate feelings through movement, vocalizations, and language. Neelands (1992) claimed that through drama, young people can begin to think about themselves and their relationship to others in the group. Gallagher (2000) used classroom process drama activities to help secondary students in an all-girl urban school find their voice and develop a sense of agency.

According to Bolton (1993), process drama activities aid in cognitive development by producing a change in understanding (p. 39). Neelands (1984) argued that drama is a way of creating and interpreting human meanings through imagined action and language (p. 6). Classroom drama is thus seen as a form of constructivist learning that can help students make sense of the world. Heathcote (1984a) articulated the means by which this constructivist learning is achieved, explaining that drama demands children to think from within a dilemma instead of talking about the dilemma (p. 119).

The very structure of process drama ensures that it encourages social interaction. The principal element in drama is role-play, the ability to put oneself in another's shoes, to find the connection between self and other, to try to understand another's point of view. From this position, in the company of others in role, students construct imagined worlds and possibilities of what might be. The deliberations, decisions, and actions of participants determine both the context of their created world and the outcome of the drama (O'Neill, 1995, pp. 90-91).

The literature on process drama provides a rich tradition of educational theory and concrete examples of successful educational practice. What is missing is the notion that these perspectives and processes might also be valuable in the rehearsal and production of scripted plays.

The Constructivist Orientation of Learning in Drama and Theatre

Central to the discussion of learning in educational drama and theatre are the tenets of a constructivist epistemology. Constructivists argue that knowledge is not an absolute external reality that we assimilate. Instead, we construct knowledge by taking in sensory information, processing it, and interpreting it. Rather than the reception of transmitted knowledge, learning is viewed as an internal process of interpretation. Learners do not transfer knowledge from the external world into their memories; rather, they create interpretations of the world based upon their past experiences and interactions in the world. Thus, individuals are actively involved in constructing personal meaning from their experiences (Flavell, 1963; Gredler, 1997; Kukla, 2000). Piaget (1950) suggested that learning occurs through processes of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation occurs when learners' new experiences align with their internal representations of the world and become assimilated into existing frameworks. Accommodation, on the other hand, occurs when learners must reframe their mental representation of the external world in order to make sense of new experiences.

Some drama in education scholars have explained the constructivist nature of educational drama by comparing participation in drama to research. Referring to "the possibility of drama itself as an investigatory tool," Bolton (1996, p. 187) explained that (a) many drama classrooms offer highly complex meaning-making activities that parallel the research process and (b) drama students commonly generate and test hypotheses through the magic of imagined possibilities. Norris (2000) explicitly likened work in drama to the research process, the task of which is to make sense of what we know. Norris explained that process drama activities invite participants to approach their work

with the goal of drawing insights and generating new meanings. Role-play thus helps participants find new ways of looking at the world; both drama content and activities provide a lived understanding of phenomena that might then be analyzed through discussion. Similarly, playbuilding and rehearsal involve spirals of external research, personal exploration, discussion, and dramatic exploration. The knowledge that is constructed through these processes is then communicated through image, gesture, and sound.

Social Learning and Social Constructivism

An important feature of learning through drama/theatre is the idea that knowledge is not simply cognitive. Learning through drama/theatre is multifaceted, as participants are required to engage and respond socially, physically, and aesthetically as well as cognitively. Theorists and practitioners agree that learning in drama is essentially social. The importance of the group as a key educative factor has been reported in several studies of adolescents participating in theatre (Conrad, 2004; Hughes & Wilson, 2004; McLauchlan, 2000; Murray, 2000). Hundert (1996) argued that learning in drama is inherently social (p. 5). Her study examined this learning from the social constructivist perspective, wherein learners understand the world through interaction, using existing cognitive frameworks to make sense of perceptions and experiences.

Social constructivist scholars emphasize that individuals make meanings through interaction with each other, that knowledge is socially constructed, and that meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities (Gredler, 1997; Kukla, 2000). Social constructivism owes a great deal to Vygotsky, whose work identified the importance of culture, language, and context in the process of constructing knowledge.

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of *scaffolding* argues that fellow learners provide a scaffold until full understanding and self-direction are achieved. Vygotsky maintained that all human knowledge originates in social interaction and stressed that the greatest learning is achieved when students participate in shared tasks aimed immediately above their present level of expertise. His concept of the *zone of proximal development* argues that students can, with help from adults or peers who are more advanced, master concepts and ideas that they cannot understand on their own.

From a social constructivist perspective, Heath and McLaughlin (1993a) proposed that students gain a sense of personal effectiveness from belonging to a successful group (p. 9). In the most productive organizations, the diversity of talents and strengths among members becomes shared as a repertoire of resources (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993b, p. 24). Ball and Heath (1993) contended that public performance of a group's activities enhances their sense of accomplishment (p. 86). According to Heath and McLaughlin (1993b):

> A sense of worth [comes] from being a member of a group or team noted for accomplishment; a sense of belonging [comes] from being needed within the organization – to teach younger members, help take care of the facility, plan and govern activities, and promote the group to outsiders. (p. 24)

Kinesthetic and Embodied Learning

In addition to being social, learning in drama and theatre is also physical, kinesthetic, and embodied. Gardner (1985), who postulated the existence of a bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, defined intelligence as the ability to solve problems or to create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings. Gardner maintained that

the core capacities of bodily intelligence are control of one's bodily motions and the capacity to handle objects skilfully. He claimed that Eurocentric cultures have neglected this intelligence by constructing false distinctions between reflective and active ways of knowing, and proposed that "this sharp distinction ... is not ... drawn in many other cultures" (p. 208). When Gardner explored the attributes of a high level of bodily intelligence, he considered the dancer, the actor, the athlete, and others.

> All skilled performances include a well-honed sense of timing, where each bit of a sequence fits into the stream in an exquisitely placed and elegant way; points of repose or shift, where one phase of behaviour is at an end, and some calibration is necessary before the second one comes into play; a sense of direction, a clear goal to which the sequence has been heading; and a point of no return, where further input of signals no longer produces a result because the final phase of the sequence has already been activated. Much of what we ordinarily call thinking – routine as well as innovative – partakes of the same principles that have been uncovered in overtly physical manifestations of skill. (pp. 208-209)

Jensen (2001) considered drama and theatre as kinesthetic arts, noting that, as such, they may enhance cognition, positive attitudes, and confidence, and that, in some cases, they may foster the growth of new brain cells. In Jensen's view, when performed well, kinesthetic arts promote learning by enhancing critical neurobiological systems, including cognitive, emotional, immune, circulatory, and perceptual-motor systems. While in motion, one's brain must constantly invent and project mental models onto a changing world. This mentally complex operation builds thinking skills.

Embodied learning is a crucial component of the drama experience (Wright,

1998), and performance has been labeled an embodied, empathic way of knowing (Schechner, 1985; Turner, 1986). Slade's early conception of drama in education, like that of principal drama theorists of the last 40 years, is grounded in experiences of the body, positioning embodied knowledge as central to the construction of personal and social meaning (Wright). Self and mind are woven through the entire human body; feelings and sensations, perceptions and habitual patterns of thinking, feeling and acting are all investigated at one time or the other by physical theatrical processes (Linds, 1998). Political activist Augusto Boal (1985), through his collection of performance practices designed to effect personal and social change, has constructed a learning system in which the body is central. Many exercises Boal describes are similar in their physicality to warm-ups and improvisation games of theatre practitioners Spolin (1999) and Johnstone (1989). By drawing attention to embodied learning, Boal also draws attention to the ways in which bodies construct meaning and minds construct knowledge from experiences of the body.

Aesthetic Learning

In addition to being social and kinesthetic, learning in both drama and theatre is also aesthetic. Students not only learn through an aesthetic process but also develop aesthetic knowledge and understanding. This aesthetic knowledge and understanding is best described by Langer's (1953) explanation of art as a form that "expresses knowledge about feeling, [and] does so in material concrete sensuous forms that rely on context and specificity and engagement for meaning" (p. 85). Eisner (1998) contended that aesthetic knowledge is particularistic; based on the senses, it deals with ways of organizing specific information and materials. Qualitative judgment required in artistic creation

involves achieving coherence among various facets of a complex form.

Geertz (1976) built a concept of aesthetic knowledge through his argument that artistic commonalities exist across cultures. Geertz described these commonalities as aesthetic qualities that are perceived through and appeal to the senses and tend to be nonutilitarian. He maintained that most cultures engage in symbolic activities that bracket off and give expression to valued aspects of life, and he argued that aesthetic activity seems specifically designed to demonstrate that ideas are innately sensual, that is, they can be "cast in forms where the senses, and through the senses the emotions, can reflectively address them" (p. 1499). Thus, art is at root "a meaning-making activity in which symbolic forms are deployed to take us on some kind of a journey" (Jackson, 2005, p. 109).

Drama and theatre scholars echo this orientation. Polanyi (1962) argued that, in theatre, we seek to communicate what we know but cannot say; that is to say, we seek deep structures of knowledge. Swartz (2003) maintained that theatre allows young people to experience "an artistic representation of the world" (p. 205). According to Bolton (1984), the spiritual awe of a well-performed play is an aesthetic experience. A sense of knowing exists that is not reducible to words. Not only the content but also the form of the artistic event conveys its meaning. Bolton distinguished between two kinds of attention demanded of a drama participant, functional and aesthetic: "If the former, the interest lies principally in treating the enactment referentially; if the latter, attention is given to more essential or universal meanings" (p. 147).

Schonmann (1996, 2000) considered the school play to be a place where students can build what Eisner (2002) termed aesthetic modes of knowing, Here, theatre and

drama education combine to provide opportunities for exploring aesthetic ways of knowing. Donmoyer (1991) similarly suggested three potential contributions of drama to curriculum thought: its potential to add an aesthetic, visceral, feeling dimension to our thinking; its potential to fill in the abstraction of thought with flesh and blood concreteness; and its potential to make intensity, passion, and motivation a part of intellectual activity. The aesthetic knowledge that one gains from involvement in a theatrical production involves both knowing about feeling and discovering how to express that knowledge in a concrete, physical form.

Bolton (1999) described the school play as an intensive form of art that addresses the senses and awareness. The result of exposure to the educational potential of the play is the development of changing patterns of thinking and not merely increased knowledge of rehearsal and performance techniques. This is a cognitive insight into the way drama as an aesthetic discipline can function, in line with Eisner's (2002) argument that, in any of the arts, the struggle to create compelling images becomes an integral part of the experience.

Cognitive Learning

In addition to being social, embodied, and aesthetic, learning through both drama and theatre is most certainly cognitive. This section discusses the cognitive growth that can occur through engagement with dramatic material. It also examines Eisner's modes of knowing and their relevance to the theatrical process. Finally, it explores the development of imagination as a form of cognitive growth.

The argument that experiential work in drama and theatre is a form of critical inquiry has support in the scholarly community. Greene (2000) argued that encounters

with the arts make possible not only an education of feeling but also an education in critical awareness. The arts provide opportunities to see new possibilities in experience, add to the modalities by means of which students make sense of their worlds, and provoke inquiry. Drawing on the work of Dewey (1963, p. 11), who advocated linking imagination to intellectual possibilities, Greene asserted that schools should encourage reflectiveness and critical inquiry by teaching modes of artistic literacy: the ability to deal with personal and social issues, read the surrounding culture, name what is lacking, and identify what might be done in positive efforts to transform inadequacies.

Work on a theatrical production, by its nature, fulfils many of these directives. In order to interpret a script, students must analyze personal and social issues, comprehend the culture of the play, and develop character objectives that attempt to transform some aspect of that culture. O'Fallon (1993) provided some suggestions for accomplishing this task. O'Fallon discussed ethical questions that arise with the global, social, and cultural change students live in and suggested that theatre/drama has the power to show students how to construct a future they want to live in.

> Along with other professionals, drama educators must confront the fundamental meaning for our current institutions and social orders, questioning them, and imagining a way of being in the world which embodies what we say we teach: imagination, empathy, responsibility, compassion, discipline, and understanding . (p. 7)

Leading students to realize that they create the future by their actions is inherent in the process of developing characters, plot, and the world of a play. "We work to provide our students with the unique knowledge and skills of the drama/theatre process

so that they will not simply receive the future, but realize that they create it with their actions" (O'Fallon, 1993, p. 4). By playing characters that create the future of the play with their actions, students live through examples of constructing a future. Thus, work on theatrical productions can provide blueprints for developing agency.

Positive ideas of global, social, and cultural change, of building structures that alter the status quo, of social justice, of bringing to consciousness the realities of the life of marginalized people, can be brought to life by the theatrical material chosen, by interpretive and artistic choices, and by rehearsal methods used. It is because the purpose of rehearsals is to create characters and understand human behaviour that these critical moments can occur. Cockett's study (1996) found that as students gained experience in drama, their critical perception developed. According to Chapman (2005), models of good citizenship can be taught through educational theatre and drama that teaches the benefits of inclusion, social justice, and the critical analysis of oppressive stereotypes.

In his work on the arts and cognition, Eisner (1982) identified a number of cognitive modes. He explained that the senses play a primary role in the formation of concepts and that each of the senses discerns particular information by means of different encoding systems. Thus, what we understand by hearing the spoken word is different from what we understand by hearing music or the sound of screeching tires. In all three examples, the sense employed is aural, but the encoding systems are different. Both the quality and content of meanings sent and received are limited by (a) the skill of the encoder and (b) the skill and experience of the receiver in deciphering that code or system of representation. Linds (1998) echoed Eisner by discussing image as a form of

language different from words, one that calls forth knowledge through a different way of knowing.

Our conception of the world reflects what our senses have made possible. The arts, including theatre, represent one of the ways through which humans construct and convey meaning. Moreover, the creation of art forms requires the use of judgment, perceptivity, imagination, ingenuity, and purpose--in a word, intelligence (Eisner, 1982). Eisner would have us, as educators, understand that not everything knowable can be articulated in propositional form. The limits of our cognition are not defined by the limits of our language, and meaning is not limited to what is assertable. The choice of a form of representation is a choice about the way individuals conceive and publicly represent an aspect of reality. Eisner's ideas expand not only our conception of the ways in which we know but also our conception of mind, and they are pivotal to understanding the cognitive nature of learning in drama and theatre.

The concept that development of the imagination is a form of cognitive growth suggests a means to the building of critical inquiry. At root, the kinds of imaginative concepts that we form relate directly both to the kind of content that each of the senses makes possible and to the way in which we understand this content. Imaginative concepts may thus suggest a base for cultural critique and social action. "Human association depends on imagination: the capacity to see in others beings like ourselves. It is thus through imagination that we render others sufficiently like ourselves for them to become subjects of tolerance and respect, sometimes even affection" (Barber, 1992, p. 5). When we conceive of possibility, "we work in the imaginative mode. We activate possibility in our perception of the world; it is this that makes what we hear and see

meaningful to us" (Courtney, 1990, p. 81). A prime way of activating the imaginative capacity is through encounters with the performing arts, the visual arts, and the art of literature (Greene, 2000).

Samson (2005) referred to the life change that occurs as we take into our own being the experiences of others and realize that not everyone views the world as we do. Such experience broadens our horizons, brings us to understand the place of "other" in our society, and invites us to imagine things as if they could be otherwise (Greene, 1988). Collinge (1997) maintained that imagination can lead students to see previously unknown possibilities and creatively visualize preferable worlds, thus becoming empowered to think and work for alternatives to violence in conflict situations. Participation in theatrical production can enhance students' work in the imaginative mode as they create the world and characters of a play, finding commonalities between themselves and the characters they enliven.

Role Play and Characterization

A discussion of the nature of learning in drama and theatre must also describe the process of such learning. The principal means of participating in theatre and drama is through characterization, or the taking on of a role, and it is primarily the role-taking process that stimulates the construction of knowledge through social, physical, aesthetic, and cognitive learning.

Performance can be an opportunity to be someone else, and young people can use this opportunity to explore, practice, experiment with, and extend their awareness of self and the world around them (Hughes & Wilson, 2004). An actor performing in a play is required to wear the mask of another identity to create a full and interesting character.

Chaikin (1972) suggested that this mask-wearing affects the actor personally: that in trying on the "disguise" or identity of another, the actor gains self-knowledge.

> In former times acting simply meant putting on a disguise. When you took off the disguise, there was the old face under it. Now it's clear that the wearing of the disguise changes the person. As he [*sic*] takes the disguise off, his [*sic*] face is changed from having worn it. The stage performance informs the life performance and is informed by it. (p. 6)

In attempting to describe this particular way of learning, scholars agree that the idea of a dual state is key. Linds (1998) discussed the concept of *metaxis*, the state of belonging simultaneously to two different worlds (Boal, 1995), wherein actors constantly shift between "I and not I" (Linds, p. 79), and drama becomes the interaction between the real and the imagined. Reflection within drama thus "allows us to see knowledge as it is enacted ... not as something which already exists" (p. 74). The field of performance studies maintains that fundamental to all performance is the characteristic of "restored behavior" (Schechner, 1985), which allows the individual to become something other than her/himself. Performance scholars describe the duality of the performer as the integration of self and character that occurs in performance. Schechner viewed performance as a paradigm of liminality. The play frame opens a liminal space where the "not me" encounters the "not not me" (p. 123). For adolescents, who are themselves in a developmental period of transition, this liminal or threshold space can be particularly powerful.

The idea of a dual state is framed somewhat differently by other scholars. States (1985) maintained that while on stage, an actor engages in two simultaneous experiences:

that of enacting the play and interacting in the world of the play, and that of a dialogue between the actor and the audience about the character the actor is playing. As a result, the actor is always in a state of double presence. Courtney (1988) argued that by taking on a role, the player exists simultaneously in two worlds, as a character inside the experience of the "as if" world and as an actor evaluating the situation from within the real world. The player is both involved and detached, alternating from one state to the other, acting and observing the self in action.

In this state of double presence, the fictional character or role exists within the body of the performer or participant; double presence is thus a powerful form of engagement in the embodied educative process. In a performative epistemology, performance is an embodied, empathic way of knowing (Conrad, 2004). According to performance theorists (Carlson, 1996), the physicality of theatrical performance offers an alternative performative way of knowing--a unique and powerful way of accessing knowledge and drawing out responses that are experiential and embodied rather than simply cognitive (Courtney, 1988).

Not only does the vehicle of role-play or characterization stimulate the various ways that students learn in drama, but also its importance is highlighted in a variety of theoretical discussions. Drama in education scholars are clear on its importance, noting that the human inclination to "re-play" imagined situations amounts to the most effective and motivational form of learning that we know (Courtney, 1982). Heathcote (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984) described the capacity of drama to clarify basic human values. In "living through" imaginary conflicts and dilemmas, pupils infuse the dramatic context with their own systems of belief. Through participation in drama, personal assumptions

are raised to light, where they may be challenged, strengthened, or modified. For Heathcote, drama's unique power lies in its ability to particularize and concretize abstract human themes (Wagner, 1999). "Dramatic activity is concerned with the ability of human beings to 'become somebody else', to 'see how it feels', and the process is a very simple and efficient way of crystallizing certain kinds of information" (Heathcote, 1984b, p. 58).

The phenomenon of characterization is pivotal in the theatrical world; indeed, actor training focuses on the creation of a role. Stanislavski (1979) explained that the believability of a character depends on (a) the actor creating a character's affective responses to specific actions and (b) the actor's own characteristics and experiences. Thus, the individual actor's sense of both self and the character feed the performance of the theatrical role. Stanislavski argued that the external factors of the character's world must become familiar during the rehearsal process and that, as the actor attends to these external factors, his/her internal psychological processes and affective states impel him/her to build a multifaceted character. This process parallels Heathcote's idea of "living through" fictional situations.

Outside the specific area of drama and theatre, role theorists in psychology stress the ability to take the role of the other as a key skill of competence in social interaction (Hughes & Wilson, 2004). Their discussions identify the importance of role in personal development and confirm the basic suppositions of the epistemology involved. The basic assumption of Kellyan psychology implies that our various lived roles provide a subjective experience by which we negotiate the social environment (Cruise & Sewell, 2000). The ability to play a social role, understand and perform to expectations of others, and develop and sustain personal style and identity is important to successful human

development. Kelly conceived role as not merely something to be acted out but also a means of understanding the world. Butt (1998) argued for a broader phenomenological interpretation of role enactment, moving beyond a strictly cognitive interpretation. In particular, the bodily involvement in playing a role and the personal constructions that remain readily available to the role player lead to a knowledge and awareness of the role that is not confined to the cognitive arena. According to Butt, assuming a role different from one's own presumes that an individual steps into the position of another, looks at the world from that point of view, and conducts oneself accordingly. Through participation in drama and theatre, students not only construct knowledge about others and their world but also construct and refine knowledge of and about social roles.

Summary of Chapter Two

The three sections of this literature review have set theoretical groundwork for an investigation of the learning derived from participating in a high school theatre company that is the focus of this study. The first section introduced the drama/theatre debate, describing its persistence in the history of drama in education. It has stressed that similarities between the concepts of drama and theatre outweigh differences and that they can be mutually reinforcing. The second section outlined developmental characteristics of adolescents and the ways in which drama and theatre experiences may influence this development. The third section described the constructivist orientation of learning in drama and theatre as well as the multifaceted nature of this learning. It asserted that role-play and characterization are forms of engagement that provide the primary vehicle for knowledge construction.

Chapter Three presents the methodology used in this investigation.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

I chose to conduct a qualitative study in order to discover, describe, and understand 4 former secondary students' school-based theatre experiences, in particular their perceptions of any links between those experiences and their personal, social, and cognitive development. A qualitative study best allowed me to represent the participants' voices.

Qualitative methodology is generally consistent with an interpretivist paradigm. According to Schram (2003), a qualitative approach, rather than positing a universal objective truth, operates under the assumption that individuals construct truth and reality within various social contexts. An important aim of a qualitative researcher is "to understand this complex, constructed reality from the point of view of those who live in it … situating people's meanings and constructs within and amid specific … contextual factors" (p. 33). I pursued a qualitative study because I wanted to understand the multiple truths that participants constructed regarding their high school theatre experiences.

As an instance of qualitative methodology, this study is characterized by "the need to work with particulars before general explanations, and an openness to the continual refinement of questions based on knowledge gained in the field" (Schram, 2003, p. 31). In the qualitative tradition, I focused on description, interpretation, and understanding, and was able to identify recurrent patterns in the form of themes or categories.

The study is based on a small, purposive sample; as researcher, I was the primary instrument of data collection, using the technique of interviews augmented by self-

reflection. I believe strongly in the value of interviewing as a method of collecting information. I agree with Fontana and Frey (2000) that interviews are "negotiated accomplishments of both interviewers and respondents that are shaped by the contexts and situations in which they take place" (p. 663). As Edge and Richards (1998) suggested, I wanted to listen closely to the participants and respect and deal seriously with the information they brought to the interviews.

In practice, similarities exist between the process of qualitative investigation and the educational theatre experience. Each seeks to understand and express a part of the human story. Each struggles with formal components of communication. Each can reveal an investigator's position in relationship to the larger culture being studied. The process of constructing knowledge through my exploration, interpretation, and communication of participant perspectives is similar to the process that students experienced in preparing a theatrical performance. The interviews, like the students' research and script exploration, uncovered personal stories. Like the students, I built an understanding of these stories and then communicated that understanding in this thesis.

Participant Selection

The study involved a purposive sample of 4 former students who participated extensively in a cocurricular high school theatre company when they attended school in a large Ontario public board. At the time of their school attendance, I served as their drama teacher and cocurricular theatre director. All 4 students have continued their involvement in theatre to varying degrees and have maintained contact with one another, with many former cast and crew members, and with me. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), purposive sampling "increases the scope or range of data exposed ... as well as the

likelihood that the full array of multiple realities will be uncovered" (p. 40). I selected a purposive sample based on criteria of gender, socioeconomic and cultural background, differences in academic level and career goals, availability, and willingness to participate.

I chose to focus on a small sample in order to gain an in-depth perspective. I first identified a pool of all high school graduates who had participated in the rehearsal and performance of published scripts between the years 1996 and 2001. I chose those years as a focus because it was during this time that we concentrated on producing published scripts as opposed to original work, and students' work with published scripts was the phenomenon that I wished to investigate. This initial list included approximately 100 potential participants. Next, I identified all students from within this list whom I knew were still living in the area; this step reduced the list of potential participants by approximately 50%. From this list, I identified students who had participated in the high school theatre company for at least 4 years, reducing the pool to approximately 20 names. I divided these names into male and female potential participants and further separated them according to cultural backgrounds. From within these categories, I identified former students whom I felt would be most likely to be articulate and frank. This final process generated 4 potential participants, 2 males and 2 females, who varied in cultural, socioeconomic, and academic background. I decided to approach all 4 with an offer to participate in this study.

I first contacted the 4 potential participants by an email that described the study and invited their participation. All 4 agreed to participate. Following Brock University Research Ethics Board procedures (REB acceptance #06-089, Appendix A), I next sent each one a letter of invitation and asked him or her to sign an informed consent form.

The letter explained that participation in the study was voluntary and that there was no expectation that anyone agree to participate. The consent form explained that participants had the right to withdraw at any time and that they would be identified by pseudonym only in all phases of the study. All 4 participants signed and returned the consent forms before participating in the study. When I had received the four consent forms, I assigned a pseudonym to each participant: Alan, Luke, Nicola, and Stacey.

Participants

All 4 participants had participated extensively as secondary school students in the rehearsal and performance of professionally written scripts. Both Alan and Luke were involved in all of the productions from 1996 to 1999 as well as in 2000 and 2001 as graduates who returned to help. Nicola was involved in 1996 and 1997 and had been involved in our student-written Sears Drama Festival productions prior to that year. As a graduate, she returned to help in 1998 and 1999. Stacey was involved from 1997 to 2001. Thus, although the participants' experiences overlap, they do not represent one specific cast. Instead, they provide an overview of several years of theatrical production.

Alan was a strong athlete and musician who played both the guitar and the French horn. His older brother was also involved in the drama program, and his family had lived in the area for many years. He participated as an actor in the high school theatre company for 4 years, beginning with a very small part, moving to a cameo and chorus performance, then to a supporting role, and finally to a major role. For the last 3 years of his participation, Alan was also involved in production activities in the areas of sets, props, and costumes; and he was the lighting designer for the production in which he played a major role. After high school, he studied theatre and history at university,

attended an Ontario faculty of education, and is currently teaching Special Education at a high school in Ontario.

A natural artist, Luke was involved in Student Cabinet, a variety of clubs, and some athletics in high school. Luke's older sister was also a student at the school, and his family had an interest in politics. Luke is a first generation Canadian whose family is of French and Italian background. He spent 4 years with the high school theatre company, playing supporting roles, working in the chorus, and later playing dual supporting roles in his final production. He was consistently involved in building and decorating sets and props, finding costumes, and hanging and focusing lights, and was the set designer of his final production. After high school, he studied fine arts in university, cofounded a web-design company, and is currently working as a learning technologies consultant at an Ontario university.

Nicola entered the program as a quiet, introverted grade 10 student. She was strong academically, with excellent language skills, but had previously not participated in school activities. Her family is of Eastern European background, and she is a first generation Canadian. Prior to the dates discussed in this study, Nicola had participated in two high school theatre company student-written productions. During the time period explored in this study, she played a cameo role as well as a chorus member in one production, and a principal role in another. In production areas, she was active in the areas of set and props construction and decoration and costume co-ordination. After high school, she studied theatre in university and is currently working as a news editor.

Stacey was a French immersion student whose friends were participants in the productions. She was also a strong music student. Her older brother was a student at the

school, and her family had lived in the area for a few years. She was involved as an actor in the high school theatre company for 5 years, playing roles ranging from a chorus member, to a cameo role, to supporting roles, to a principal role. She studied drama and music at university, attended an Ontario faculty of education, and is currently working as a high school drama and music teacher in Ontario.

Data Collection

Data were collected in the spring and summer of 2007, when the 4 former students took part in two in-depth, open-ended interviews. The first interviews elicited answers to the same set of questions (see Appendix B). After transcribing and coding the first set of interviews, I designed a set of personalized second interview questions for each participant in order to explore themes and issues raised by each first interview (see Appendixes C, D, E, and F).

I generated the first interview questions from a variety of sources. Educational theatre literature suggested some of them, particularly Greene's (1995) ideas about critical engagement and Boal's (2002) ideas about embodied learning. Hundert's (1996) doctoral study provided examples of interview questions to investigate the nature of learning in secondary drama. Finally, some questions related to my own teaching experience and observations as well as my need to understand the students' point of view. By turning interviews into storytelling invitations, as Hollway and Jefferson (1997) recommended, I phrased questions to elicit narratives. I conducted the eight 1-hour interviews at my home, a convenient site for most participants. With the participants' permission, each interview was audio-recorded.

I transcribed the audiotapes verbatim. I included pauses, repetitions,

demonstrative expressions, and interruptions because they contain information about the way that participants give voice to their experience. I included transcription conventions that reflected the purpose of the research (Tilley & Powick, 2002; Appendix G). I transcribed the interviews myself because I agree with Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) that the process of transcription is both interpretive and constructive, and with Tilley (2003) that "researchers miss out on the kinds of understandings that develop as tapes are transcribed as well as lose control over some of the transcription decisions made when they do not do the work themselves" (p. 770).

According to Lapadat and Lindsay (1999),

> it is not just the transcription product – those verbatim words written down – that is important; it is also the process that is valuable. Analysis takes place and understandings are derived through the process of constructing a transcript by listening and re-listening, viewing and re-viewing ... transcription facilitates the close attention and the interpretive thinking that is needed to make sense of the data. (p. 82)

Throughout the research process, I maintained a research journal of personal reflections and analytical thoughts. I wrote a field note after each interview in order to contextualize and capture information not included on the tape. As I transcribed, I added any new insights to my notes.

Data Analysis

To code the data, I used a combination of the three-stage process described by Coffey and Atkinson (1996, pp. 32-52) and the process described by Creswell (2002, pp. 237-239). First, after transcribing the first set of four interviews, I read each individual

transcript several times in its entirety, noting and highlighting insights (short phrases, ideas, and concepts) on each reading, as well as posing questions in my research journal. Second, as an initial means of organizing information, I separated and distilled data from each transcript into two broad categories. These two a priori codes directly reflected my research questions: (a) What, if any, personal, social, and/or cognitive development did participants attribute to their participation in a high school cocurricular theatre program? and (b) What contextual factors did participants associate with any development they reported? Thus, the two broadest categories indicated (a) perceptions of development of any sort and (b) perceived factors associated with development. This "data-reduction" (Coffey & Atkinson, p. 35) step allowed me to identify interview segments that related directly to the study's general focus.

I then grouped information in each broad category into more precise codes. I coded for perceptions of personal, social, and cognitive development and for specific rehearsal and performance practices leading to that development. This procedure resulted in my intermediate categories.

Finally, I proceeded to the third and most precise level of categorization, separating the intermediate codes into more detailed codes. In other words, I noted what specific aspects of personal, social, and cognitive development participants discussed and what specific rehearsal and performance practices they ascribed to this development. Most codes came directly from participants' own words. A very small number reflected my interpretation of what a participant was articulating in the transcript.

Following the coding of the first interviews, I generated questions for the second set of interviews. These questions were individualized in order to elicit clarification or

expansion of information provided in the first interviews. After conducting the second set of interviews, I repeated the same three-stage categorization process that I conducted for the first interviews. Throughout the process, I cross-referenced my research journal notes with codes emerging from the transcripts.

The third and most detailed level of analysis yielded a total of 97 specific codes across both interview sets. I examined the 97 codes for overlap and collapsed them into discrete categories (see Appendix H: Collapsed Codes). I looked for patterns, themes, and regularities as well as contrasts and irregularities, and I grouped similar thoughts and ideas together, based on the language used by the participants. For example, Nicola's "courage" (Interview 1, p. 7), Alan's "confidence" (Interview 1, p. 3), Luke's "belief in [his] own possibilities" (Interview 2, p. 4), and Stacey's "belief in self" (Interview 2, p. 7) were collapsed into a single code that I labelled "confidence."

The completed coding process revealed unexpected regularities important to the study. For example, a frequently repeated code was that the high school theatre experience was instrumental in "shaping the way you deal with things for the rest of your life" (Nicola, Interview 1, p. 1). I found this code disconcerting; I had always hoped that I was developing, educating, and empowering students, but the term "shaping" concerned me, and I paid very strict attention to the words the participants used to describe "shaping the way you deal with things." I recorded my reflections in my research journal, and at this stage the study took on additional importance for me.

At this point I realized that participants attributed growth outside my initial framework (i.e., personal, social, and cognitive development) to their participation in the theatre company. I thus expanded my focus to include (a) the long-term life influence of

participants' experiences and (b) the development of enduring attitudes and values. I also realized that factors influencing students' development consisted of more than procedural rehearsal and performance practices. They also included both the world of the plays we worked on and abiding characteristics of the high school theatre company itself. These three distinct contexts (rehearsal and performance practices, the world of the plays, and the nature of the high school theatre company) roughly paralleled O'Toole's (1992) contexts for process drama. O'Toole claimed that any dramatic event involves the fictional context (which in this study was the world of the plays), the context of the setting (which in this study was the high school theatre company), and the context of the medium (represented in this study by various rehearsal and performance practices). The analysis process taught me that "it is very hard totally to separate the messages and meanings belonging to ... the setting and the medium from those of the dramatic fiction" (p. 53). However, as I looked for patterns and themes, I discovered that each of the three contexts held a different importance for each developmental category. I was now able to link perceived development to both factors and their contexts.

Establishing Credibility

I established the credibility of the study primarily through member checks. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "the member check, whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). In addition to being an accepted technique for establishing credibility, member checking is consistent with my constructivist stance. Edge and Richards (1998) explained that constructivism rests on

the belief that reality is socially constructed and that research must involve clarifying the ways in which meaning is constructed by those involved. Therefore its findings must be created interactively rather than discovered from a privileged perspective.

In order for the study to be credible, participants had to reflect on and validate interview statements. I also invited them to reflect on, validate, and contribute to the interpretation of the data and conclusions drawn. Thus, member checks not only ensured that participants' voices were heard but also engaged them in the form of representation. I concur with Borland (1991), who argued that if we don't agree on what the story actually was, we might also have different opinions of how it should be told.

After transcribing the interviews, I gave the appropriate transcript, a copy of my field notes, and a synopsis of my interpretations to each participant and invited him or her to make changes or suggestions. All participants replied that they agreed with the transcripts and the synopses, that there had been no misinterpretation, and that I had represented their comments accurately. They reported in email communications that the interviews had brought back a lot of great memories and expressed thanks for the opportunity to participate.

I sent the participants a copy of the first draft of the thesis and invited them to provide written commentary and meet with me to discuss the validity of conclusions and the accuracy of representation. In this way, I attempted to ensure that (a) I had represented multiple constructions of shared phenomena adequately, (b) participants agreed with the reconstructions I arrived at, and (c) participants' voices were heard. All participants replied through email that each one was accurately represented and that their voices were heard. Nicola added,

> I have no suggestions for improvement, and no objections to anything regarding our interviews .... Seeing it in this context makes me really astounded at what we accomplished over the years. It was really great to get a sense of how the others responded, and to see that we thought so similarly about our experience .... Thanks for letting me take part. (email communication May 5, 2009)

As a separate means of establishing credibility, Lincoln and Guba (1985) encouraged prolonged engagement and the investment of sufficient time within a culture. They maintained that "it is not possible to understand *any* phenomenon without reference to the context within which it is embedded" (p. 302). Although the research process itself took place over a few months, my engagement in the research context spanned several years, during which I established trust with the participants. I have honoured and maintained that trust during the research process and have demonstrated to the respondents

> that their confidences [would] not be used against them; that pledges of anonymity [were] honoured; that hidden agendas ... [were] not being served; that the interests of the respondents [were] honoured as much as those of the investigator; and that the respondents [had] input into, and actually influence[d], the inquiry process. (p. 303)

As a final means of establishing credibility, in writing this thesis I have identified my personal, conceptual, methodological, and theoretical bases (Richardson, 1995). I agree with Fine and Weiss (1996) that researchers have a responsibility to talk about their own identities, thereby explaining why they interrogate what they do, and on whom they train their scholarly gaze, in order to position their research and themselves. In my

research journal, I addressed Knupfer's (1996) notion that "we need to directly address our biases, our limitations, our theoretical frameworks, our reasons for choosing frameworks and for choosing other interpretive modes and channels" (p. 145).

Ethical Considerations

I received clearance from the Brock University Research Ethics Review Board to conduct this study. Involvement was voluntary, and participants could have withdrawn at any time and for any reason. I labelled audiotapes and written transcripts from the interviews using pseudonyms only and used the assigned pseudonyms when reporting the findings. I sent a copy of the findings to all participants before the report was finalized and asked them to comment, in writing or in person, on any inaccuracies or omissions.

Because I wished to conduct respectful research, I had to consider additional issues that might surface. I knew that there might be shifts in direction that could not be foreseen or planned for, but at the same time could not be ignored. I also recognized "the impossibility of participants (and the researcher) knowing fully what the implications of their involvement in the research might be, either on a daily basis or in the future" (Tilley, 1998, p. 320). Due to the unforeseen nature of these shifts and implications, there had to be a continuing focus on respectful and ethical research. I understood that researchers cannot predict specifics of these ethical decisions and procedures. However, there are some ethical principles to which I am committed and which I used as a basis for decisions. In order to ensure a focus on these principles, I created a self-reflexive section on ethics in my research journal.

The first of these principles is that I did not use deception. I believe that informed consent is a central ethical principle, and I agree with Howe and Moses (1999) that "part

of the informed consent process is describing to participants just what the risks to their privacy might be and what measures will be taken to ensure anonymity or confidentiality" (pp. 25-26). This responsibility does not end with the institutional ethics requirements; it must be, and was, considered and discussed during the course of the interviews.

Second, I have attempted to remain aware of my status and how it affected the research process. Like Tilley (1998), I understand the difficulty of describing a complex relationship with participants. I am aware that my relationship with participants in my study has changed; we are no longer teacher and students but rather researcher and participants. Furthermore, our relationship continued to change throughout the course of the research. However, in the same way that this research paralleled our previous rehearsal and performance processes, my status in this study and my relationship to its participants has in many ways paralleled our former situation at Greenwood Secondary School. Taylor (2000) used the image of teachers as guides and collaborators who provoke questioning, exploration, and discovery and who grow and learn with their students. I recognize that I am and have been in a privileged position in relation to study participants as both teacher and researcher. Yet I define myself in this study as a researcher/collaborator, one whose responsibility it is to represent knowledge coconstructed with participants.

The third ethical principle involves my belief that participants have a right to privacy and freedom from humiliation and embarrassment (Howe & Moses, 1999, p. 21). Thus I did not pose questions that sought to expose humiliating or embarrassing information, nor did I include any extremely sensitive transcript material in this thesis.

Finally, in conducting the research, I attempted to focus on "reciprocal relationships from which both researchers and participants benefit" (Tilley, 1998, p. 325). I believe that communal benefit accrued from the research. During the member checking process, both Alan and Stacey revealed that the interviews sparked new insights into their own teaching; Luke claimed that revisiting the high school theatre experience has infused his own artistic projects, and Nicola explained that participating in the interviews and reading the first draft of the thesis brought her own development into focus.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to 4 former students who had been heavily involved in the theatre program of one Ontario secondary school. Participants included 2 male and 2 female graduates who participated in the rehearsal and performance of published scripts between the years 1996 and 2001. Data were collected over the course of 8 months through in depth, open-ended interviews. The study used solely qualitative techniques.

By delimiting the study to qualitative methods and data, it has been possible to explore a specific phenomenon in depth but not to generalize to other contexts and situations. The participants were former students who voluntarily remained heavily invested in a high school theatre company through 4 years of high school. The findings may not be applicable to students less invested or to those who participated for shorter periods of time. Furthermore, the theatre company was attached to a well-established and mature secondary school drama program, and some findings may not be applicable to new or developing programs.

Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter outlined the steps followed in conducting this qualitative study. The

first section described the reasons for choosing the qualitative research design. The second and third sections introduced and outlined the process of selecting participants. The fourth and fifth sections described data collection and analysis procedures. The sixth section described the establishment of credibility in the study. The next section highlighted ethical considerations that focused on respect for participants' rights. The final section outlined the scope and delimitations of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the self-perceived effects of involvement in secondary-school-based theatre on 4 former students' personal, social, and cognitive development as well as the perceived factors leading to any development that occurred. Two broad questions guided the study:

1. What, if any, personal, social, and/or cognitive development did participants attribute to their participation in a high school co-curricular theatre program?
2. What contextual factors did participants associate with any development they reported?

Participants unanimously reported wide-ranging developmental gains as a result of their involvement in the high school theatre company. During the analysis process involved in this study, I realized how difficult it is to separate aspects of personal, social, and cognitive development, as they are interrelated and interdependent. However, I decided to maintain three distinct categories for the sake of organization and discussion.

Participants also identified various factors that contributed to their personal, social, and cognitive growth. Overall, the major factor appeared to be the multifaceted nature of their high school theatre experience. Contexts overarching these factors related to rehearsal and performance practices, the world of the play, and the characteristics of the high school theatre company itself.

Personal Development

The 4 participants in this study claimed to experience considerable personal development as a result of their experiences in the high school theatre company. Personal development categories included (a) self-knowledge, (b) confidence, (c) self-acceptance

and awareness of potential, and (d) coping skills.

Self-Knowledge

Through his assessment of human qualities and emotions in the characters and scripts he studied, Luke discovered new elements of himself: "You start assessing your own qualities as a human being ... when you try and become someone else. I think it shaped me to become who I am, and it gave me a certain pride in that as well" (Luke, Interview 1, p. 9).

Like Luke, other participants maintained that school-based theatrical experiences helped them understand themselves better. The foundation of their personal development came from this growth of self-knowledge, which then provided a platform for learning in other categories. Alan (Interview 1, p. 4) and Stacey (Interview 1, p. 2) discovered similarities and differences between themselves and the characters they played; Nicola found "aspects of myself and my background" (Interview 2, p. 10) to incorporate into her enacted characters and contexts.

Factors leading to the development of self-knowledge included (a) students' relationship to a range of characters, (b) script content, and (c) process drama activities. The first two factors were contained within the context of the world of the play, and process drama activities were a part of the context of rehearsal and performance practices.

Participants described their relationship to a range of characters as the major factor in the development of self-knowledge. Playing characters outside their own lived experience caused them to discover similarities and differences between themselves and the roles they played. In order to experience or demonstrate life as someone else, Luke

had to "delve deep inside myself" (Interview 1, p. 9). Character building activities made Stacey think about "what I was doing as a character, and about myself and my own life" (Interview 1, p. 6). She discovered how she was different from or similar to a character and reflected on characters and the choices they made (Interview 2, p. 6). Alan's relationship to various characters allowed him to find his voice and recognize similarities and differences between himself and those roles (Interview 1, pp. 4-5).

Nicola and Stacey admired the strength found in some of the women they played. Certain characters appealed to Nicola: They were strong females who had opinions, and she learned to "craft moments where strong female characters got to shine" (Interview 1, p. 4) in performance. Stacey found aspects of her own personality in one role and tried to apply some of the character's qualities to her own life. The character was a strong woman, grounded and earthy, and "she didn't take guff" (Interview 1, p. 5). Playing that role encouraged Stacey to become more grounded and look at daily and world events from a new perspective.

All participants related differently to characters, depending on whether or not they admired them. When Nicola played characters she considered admirable, she was motivated to "realize them more fully" (Interview 2, p. 10) so that others would feel the same admiration. However, when she played someone she felt was not admirable, she found it "really interesting and sometimes even fun" (Interview 2, p. 10) to portray a role unlike herself in real life. Stacey found it easier to connect with admirable characters; however, when she played weak characters, she analyzed their actions and pondered ways they "could easily have changed the outcome of their lives" (Interview 2, p. 6).

When Alan played a positive character, he found parts of himself that he could build on, but when he played the role of a torturer in one production, he maintained a separation between self and role (Interview 2, p. 6). Similarly, when Luke played characters that included a torturer and a self-serving agent, he too distanced himself from the role. He reminded himself that he was not actually this person; his performance was a tool; he was presenting this character to an audience for a specific purpose, with a specific direction, to tell a story, or to convey a message. However, he used the opportunity of playing immoral characters to "critically analyze my own beliefs and moral structure" (Interview 2, p. 3).

Participants discussed the characterization process and its relationship to their self-knowledge and their lives. For Luke, who played strong characters that demanded a physical presence, the "physicality of performance" (Interview 1, p. 13) became a way of learning about himself. Stacey "used a lot of personal experience" (Interview 1, p. 6) to make decisions about characters' motivations. Alan built on similarities between himself and characters he admired (Interview 1, p. 4). Nicola related the process of characterization to self-knowledge and life skills:

> A character could be any number of things, but you have to choose what you are going to make it. And you have to choose what you're going to make yourself to be, too .... I have to choose what I'm going to project to the world, so being able to recognize how multifaceted a person or a character is and then choosing what you're going to emphasize and what you're going to hide, that's all part of functioning in the world. (Interview 2, p. 6)

Participants were also affected by characters they didn't play. Luke was influenced by these other characters when he found in them "qualities I could relate to or admire" (Interview 2, p. 5). Nicola (Interview 1, p. 4) and Stacey (Interview 1, p. 12) spoke of studying the lives of strong females played by other cast members.

In addition to the relationship to a character, both script content and process drama activities contributed to the development of participants' self-knowledge. For example, at a time when he was still discovering what he wanted in life, the script content introduced Luke to different worlds:

> Especially with doing plays or texts based on historical events, you start to establish relationships with people who have long passed, or a culture that's long gone. But somehow through the research or through the reenactment ... you find similarities in the humans then and now. (Interview 2, p. 5)

Alan explained that process drama contributed to self-knowledge in that it "teaches you that you can be a lot of different people. There are a lot of different hats that you can wear" (Interview 2, p. 8). Stacey felt that process drama activities encouraged her development as a person because they caused her to "explore different areas of myself by putting myself in situations where I didn't necessarily feel comfortable" (Interview 2, p. 10).

Confidence

The development of confidence figured very strongly in participants' responses, and was pivotal in encouraging further growth in all areas. Alan claimed that rehearsal and performance fostered his ability to "walk into a room and start talking to anybody" (Interview 1, p. 3) as well as his ability to "present information to a group of people"

(Interview 1, p. 3). Stacey reported that high school theatre helped her to "present myself confidently" (Interview 1, p. 3). Luke believed that theatre gave him the confidence to strive for success and be who he wanted to be. By developing confidence in himself, "I realized that I could achieve my goals" (Interview 1, p. 4). Nicola described her experience in school-based theatre as seminal to the building of her confidence. "[High school theatre] gives you the confidence to get through any situation that you encounter and really does allow you to build the courage to ask questions for the rest of your life" (Nicola, Interview 1, pp. 1-2).

Factors leading to the development of self-confidence included (a) the experience of performing for an audience, (b) multiyear involvement in the theatre company, and (c) a sense of community within the company. The latter two factors belonged to the context of the characteristics of the high school theatre company, whereas the first was a factor in the context of rehearsal and performance practices.

Performing for an audience put Stacey "outside my comfort zone, and made me more comfortable with that zone" (Interview 2, p. 1). Multiyear involvement enhanced Luke's personal skills, including "independence and the confidence to succeed" (Interview 2, p. 2). Nicola's 4 years of involvement "turned around my self-worth, basically; it built it over the course of several years" (Interview 1, pp. 2-3). A sense of community and accountability to other cast members helped Nicola overcome shyness and build confidence. Being a cast member meant that she felt a responsibility to others and that she "couldn't stay shy and introverted" (Interview 2, p. 2). Slowly she built her confidence and ability to express herself.

Self-Acceptance and Awareness of Potential

All participants gained a degree of self-acceptance as well as an awareness of their potential. Stacey's involvement helped her realize how far she could push herself, made her comfortable with who she was, strengthened her character, helped her become more grounded, and increased her comfort level with both her physical presence and her own opinions (Interview 1, pp. 6-7). The production process enhanced Luke's belief that "if I wanted to do something, I could do it" (Interview 1, p. 4). Alan realized that "there was a lot more I could achieve than I ever thought possible" (Interview 1, p. 3), and Nicola learned that her "passion and initiative" (Interview 1, p. 3) would lead to success.

Participants attributed their growth in self-acceptance and awareness of potential to the practice of performing for a public audience. For example, Stacey found that the acknowledgement and reinforcement that came from performing provided a sense of accomplishment that she rarely found elsewhere, and "that final achievement" (Interview 2, p. 12) helped her to discover her potential. Alan realized that he had the potential to improvise in any situation because, during a performance, if a coplayer dropped lines, he was able to accept the situation and "make it work" (Interview 2, p. 1).

Coping Skills

Self-efficacy, the ability to cope, represented an aspect of personal development for the participants. The process of putting a production together taught them how to "make things work" (Alan, Interview 1, p. 3). Stacey explained that rehearsal and performance taught her how to cope and "deal with stress under pressure" (Interview 1, p. 2), and Luke maintained that involvement in theatre encouraged him "to work more

independently" (Interview 1, p. 4). Nicola learned to control her emotions and "get on with things" (Interview 1, p. 1).

> [Involvement in high school theatre] shapes the way you deal with things for the rest of your life, because I do not panic when things fly off the handle anymore. If the sky fell in I'd say "pick it up," because I learned in that 4 years that anything that falls apart, you can put back together again. (Nicola, Interview 1, p. 1)

Participants attributed the development of coping skills to (a) their involvement in process drama activities, (b) the theatre experience itself, (c) performance for an audience, and (d) multiyear involvement in the company. The first three of these factors are found in the context of rehearsal and performance practices; the final factor belongs in the context of characteristics of the high school theatre company.

Participating in process drama activities contributed to Luke's ability to cope. Interacting in real-time fictional situations developed his ability to communicate orally, physically, and emotionally (Interview 2, p. 1). Through process drama, Luke also learned to improvise, and he views this "ability to adapt and change [as] a critical skill for success" (Interview 2, p. 1).

Nicola believed that the theatre experience itself was somewhat responsible for a growth in coping skills. She highlighted specifically the touring experience as a factor, explaining that learning to adapt quickly to new performance spaces led to the ability to cope in a variety of situations. "Once you've done that a couple of times you realize you can cope, and it becomes part of yourself, your philosophy" (Interview 2, p. 4).

The act of performing for an audience contributed to Alan's coping skills. He realized that his ability to improvise if something went wrong during a performance represented the "ability to cope" (Interview 2, p. 1). Nicola's 4 years of involvement slowly taught her to "function better in the world" (Interview 1, p. 2).

Summary of Personal Development, Contributing Factors, and Contexts

All 4 participants described a growth in self-knowledge as they performed exploratory exercises and struggled to understand and portray fictional characters. All maintained that their involvement in high school theatre gave them confidence and developed their ability to both cope and work successfully. All became more comfortable with who they were and recognized that they could realize achievements they had not foreseen. They consistently related the development of performance skills to skills necessary in daily life. Factors related to the fictional world (i.e., the choice of script and the focus on exploration and research) contributed to participants' self-knowledge. Rehearsal and performance practices were particularly important to participants' personal development. Confidence and coping skills were fostered by process drama activities, the theatre experience, and performing for an audience. The act of performance also contributed to self-acceptance, and process drama further developed self-knowledge. The characteristics of the high school theatre company aided the development of confidence, self-acceptance, and coping skills. Table 1 summarizes the personal developmental outcomes as well as contributing factors and contexts.

Social Development

Participants identified social development in the areas of interpersonal skills and the capacity to collaborate toward a common goal.

Table 1

Summary of Personal Developmental Outcomes, Contributing Factors, and Contexts

Developmental outcome	Contributing factors	Context
Self-knowledge	Relationship to characters	World of the play
	Script content	
	Process drama	Rehearsal and performance practices
Confidence	Performance for an audience	Rehearsal and performance practices
	Multiyear involvement	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
	Sense of community	
Self-acceptance and awareness of potential	Performance for an audience	Rehearsal and performance practices

(table continues)

Developmental outcome	Contributing factors	Context
Coping skills	Process drama	Rehearsal and performance practices
	The theatre experience	
	Performance for an audience	
	Multiyear involvement	Characteristics of the high school theatre company

Interpersonal Skills

Participants described an increased ability to work with others as a result of membership in the company. Alan stated directly that his involvement in the theatre program "developed my interpersonal skills" (Interview 1, p. 1), Nicola spoke of learning "how to interact with people" (Interview 1, p. 2), Stacey remembered that high school theatre "teaches you to work with people" (Interview 2, p. 1), and Luke built "a basis for interpersonal skills" (Interview 1, p. 10).

Factors contributing to interpersonal skill development included (a) the physical theatre space, (b) a sense of community within the theatre company, (c) multiyear involvement, and (d) performance for an audience. The first three factors are found within the context of the characteristics of the high school theatre company; the fourth factor belongs in the context of rehearsal and performance practices. Luke and Stacey contributed the most salient comments.

The freedom of the physical space was influential in Luke's interpersonal development. The physical space induced "a natural sort of mulling around" (Interview 1, p. 11). The space was inclusive, putting no one on a higher level than others. The teacher was in close proximity to the students, and the students felt unrestricted. Luke believed that "more interpersonal communication happened there" (Interview 1, p. 11) than in traditional classrooms.

Both Luke and Stacey stressed the value of community within the high school theatre company. Luke mentioned the diversity of interpretations that emerged from various students, the different choices they made, and the interesting dynamic created when diverse groups of people were put into situations wherein they had to work

together (Interview 1, p. 3). He "paid attention to how other people translated material and listened to the ways that others interpreted dialogue" (Interview 1, p. 3). He described the high school theatre company as "a strong and inclusive community" (Interview 1, p. 11) with a great deal of camaraderie, and he acknowledged the empowerment that came from a sense of affiliation. Luke recalled a fun, friendly environment in which people began to trust one another and where the level of trust increased as they interacted. The collaborative environment encouraged peer feedback, and thus students "worked harder, produced more work, learned from each other" (Interview 1, p. 13), and developed interpersonal skills.

Stacey credited the development of her interpersonal skills to long-term involvement in the group, explaining that she made "a lot of good friends over the years" (Interview 1, p. 1) and learned to work well with others because of the extended time they were together (Interview 1, p. 1). Stacey described the high school theatre company as a positive learning environment, in which she could trust her peers to support her. Although stressful times existed, the atmosphere was generally comfortable and relaxing (Interview 2, p. 3).

> You felt like you were an actual member of something and you were committed to that group of people .... You felt like you were ... part of a process, part of a team ... as opposed to feeling like an individual *in* something .... Your decisions affect the group and what you choose to do or choose not to do has an impact on the others .... [Participation in high school theatre] created a strong community group that a lot of us keep returning to. (Interview 2, p. 3)

Luke described performance for a public audience as a factor in the development

of his interpersonal skills. He noted the positive and shared group feelings that came from communicating to a large group of people. Although that communication made him feel vulnerable, he was able to "trust the audience with that vulnerability" (Interview 2, p. 13).

Collaboration Toward a Common Goal

All participants spoke of learning to work for a common goal and developing collaborative skills. Luke provided the most direct and succinct comment.

> The thing that really stands out is the fact that I was a part of a group of people, and a collective of artists, students, teachers, and former students, who were all working together to do what they wanted to do. (Luke, Interview 1, p. 1)

Participants also learned to collaborate with those less invested in a project than they were. Alan learned that "20% of the people really *do* do 80% of the work, but that's okay" (Interview 1, p. 1). Nicola learned to deal with those who "didn't want to work as hard as I did" (Interview 1, p. 2), and Stacey learned to deal with the "frustration of waiting for others" (Interview 1, p. 3) to learn facets of productions.

Factors leading to the development of collaborative skills were (a) the company ethos, (b) a sense of community within the company (c) multiyear involvement, and (d) student responsibility for production tasks. All of these factors are found within the context of the characteristics of the high school theatre company. Luke (Interview 2, p. 1) and Stacey (Interview 2, p. 2) claimed that the company ethos, which focused on individual contribution to group success, built collaborative skills. This underlying tenet taught Luke "how to maximize my own strengths when working with other people and how to share strengths" (Interview 2, p. 1). Luke learned that an individual's positive

contribution to the group benefited both the group and the individual. That understanding built his confidence to "work collaboratively over long periods of time" (Interview 2, p. 2). Stacey suggested that collaboration was a core company value; she recalled a focus on peer accountability, teamwork, and group achievement "from the audition process to the final performance" (Interview 2, p. 2).

A sense of community was an important factor in participants' development of collaborative skills. Both Alan (Interview 2, p. 2) and Nicola (Interview 2, p. 2) expressed the importance of liking the people they worked with; both identified accountability to people and projects as a factor in the development of collaborative skills. Alan recalled that commitment to the group ensured that individuals would collaborate until they accomplished their goal. "It sort of forces your hand once you're in and you've committed to all these things to all these people" (Interview 2, p. 2). Stacey learned that "if you miss a rehearsal, it's not just you, it's the team" (Interview 2, p. 2) that is affected.

All participants maintained that their responsibility for production tasks built collaborative skills. Being a lighting designer taught Alan to work with set and costume designers to achieve a cohesive overall production style and "one common goal" (Interview 1, p. 9). Nicola (Interview 1, p. 8) and Stacey (Interview 2, p. 11), as costume co-ordinators, similarly learned to design costumes within the overall concept of a production. Through designing sets, Luke learned to contribute to "a group of people working hard to accomplish something" (Interview 1, p. 6).

Luke claimed that the extended time period led to "the confidence to succeed ...

and maintain a long-term working relationship with a large group of people" (Interview 2, p. 2).

Summary of Social Development, Contributing Factors, and Contexts

All participants described learning to interact with people, collaborate toward a common goal, and work with and tolerate the perspectives of others less invested in a project. Participants reported that a strong community, the company ethos, the physical theatre space, their responsibility for production tasks, performance for an audience, and their multiyear involvement were factors contributing to their social development. All but one of these factors directly relate to the characteristics of the high school theatre company. Table 2 summarizes the social developmental outcomes as well as the contributing factors and contexts.

Cognitive Development

Participants described cognitive growth through their involvement in the high school theatre company. This development occurred in categories of (a) knowledge and understanding, (b) cognitive processes, (c) cognitive skills, and (d) the connection of mind and body. Subcategories emerged within each cognitive growth category.

In the category of knowledge and understanding, participants identified gains in the development of global and historical awareness and a deeper understanding of context and story. The development of cognitive processes involved subcategories of (a) the translation, transformation, and ownership of written material; (b) the growth of critical consciousness and the inclination to question; and (c) the development of creative thinking and imagination. Participants agreed that their participation in high school theatre enhanced their cognitive skills in the areas of (a) organizational and analytical

Table 2

Summary of Social Developmental Outcomes, Contributing Factors, and Contexts

Developmental outcome	Contributing factors	Context
Interpersonal skills	Physical space	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
	Sense of community	
	Multiyear involvement	
	Performance for an audience	Rehearsal and performance practices
Collaboration toward a common goal	Theatre company ethos	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
	Sense of community	
	Multiyear involvement	
	Production responsibilities	

skills, (b) research skills, and (c) theatre and drama skills.

Knowledge and Understanding: Global and Historical Awareness

All participants discussed their growth in global and historical awareness. Participation in productions offered Alan an awareness of both world events and Canadian history (Interview 1, p. 8). Stacey maintained that every production increased her empathy and insight into circumstances and events of a given time. She still remembers the time periods and events involved in the plays as well as instances of injustice and "how they made me feel" (Interview 1, p. 1). Luke's involvement gave him a broader worldview in three ways: (a) he learned to analyze history and historical events, (b) he learned to look beyond history at different cultures, and (c) he developed a framework for world events and places and was able "to see visuals of those places" (Interview 1, p. 16).

Nicola believed that company involvement developed her empathetic awareness and understanding of world cultures and issues.

> Your experience of the world is so limited when you're a teenager, you just don't think outside your own experience, but [involvement with these plays] gave us the chance to experience the circumstances that other people have lived through; we got involved in different time periods, we got involved in different people's lives. (Nicola, Interview 1, p. 6)

All participants attributed their increased global and historical awareness primarily to script content, in particular their exploration of social and historical facts involving times and cultures outside their lived experiences. Other factors included (a) an investigative approach to the material, (b) the experiential nature of rehearsals,

(c) multiyear involvement in the high school theatre company, and (d) student responsibility for production tasks. Thus, global and historical awareness developed as an interplay among all three contextual categories: the world of the play, rehearsal and performance practices, and the characteristics of the high school theatre company.

Alan developed global and historical awareness because "the plays we worked on were histories that made my world larger" (Interview 1, p. 8). By studying scripts based on factual incidents, Stacey built an awareness of world events. She "understood the triggers for incidents" (Interview 1, p. 9) because she could take the perspective of those involved. Although outside her lived experience, script content "could be thought of in present-day conditions" (Interview 2, p. 9). Luke agreed that the scripts provided a broad range of knowledge, as they dealt with current and historical events from diverse world settings. "The more broad the portfolio of productions was, the more broad my knowledge became" (Interview 1, p. 5). Nicola discussed the importance of learning about specific world events during adolescence because "when you deal with a situation like the Romanian Revolution when you're 16, 17, it does open up your ability to wonder about things like that for the rest of your life" (Interview 1, p. 6).

Participants also discussed the value of an investigative approach to the material. In the high school theatre company, each script was used as a model, or a case study, to investigate aspects of the human condition. Students researched the culture and content of the world of the script and discovered a variety of issues analogous to their own. Both Nicola and Luke claimed that this investigative approach was a factor in the development of global and historical awareness. Nicola was able to experience circumstances that other people had lived through, make meaning from the process, and take ownership of

information (Nicola, Interview 1, p. 5). Luke claimed that the investigative process led him to "understand a culture, then the history of that culture" (Interview 1, p. 16).

Through the experiential nature of rehearsals, students made and communicated meaning. Alan regarded his involvement in high school theatre as "a live action history lesson" (Interview 1, p. 3) that allowed him to embody real characters and enact what people had actually done. In creating a story, he was also creating a life; he lived through what he thought would have happened and shared his experience with an audience. The experiential process "helps you retain things .... It also helps your understanding of the material" (Interview 2, p. 9).

Students also built incremental knowledge of global and historical issues because of their multiyear involvement with the company. Stacey, for example, claimed that every production "increased [her] insight into world events" (Interview 1, p. 9). Nicola noted that, over the years, the material explored a range of subject matter and forms, and "the voices of different authors" (Interview 2, p. 12) expanded her knowledge of world issues.

Aside from acting in productions, students assumed responsibility for production tasks. Working on costume design and realization taught Stacey, for example, about the people and issues in the world of the script because she needed to "take a different look at the script" (Interview 2, p. 11) to examine the characters' socioeconomic status and power relationships.

Knowledge and Understanding: Deeper Understanding of Context and Story

The high school theatre experience led students to a deeper understanding of context and story. Alan developed a complex comprehension of the subject matter of

each play and conjured the reality of the script and its characters. "You come out with a deeper understanding of material when you do a production because you've lived it" (Interview 1, p. 6). Stacey came to understand and remember historical contexts, and acquired "more of a perspective" (Interview 1, p. 9) on historical characters, power issues, and symbols. Both Nicola (Interview 1, p. 4) and Luke (Interview 1, p. 16) achieved increased understanding of the contextual causes of historical events.

Participants attributed their deeper understanding of context and story to (a) their relationships to characters, (b) the experiential nature of rehearsal, (c) the variety of cognitive modes and approaches used, (d) aesthetic qualities of the theatre, and (e) the extensive time entailed in production and performance. Thus, a balanced interplay of all three contextual categories (the world of the play, rehearsal and performance practices, and the characteristics of the high school theatre company) led to the development of deeper understanding of context and story.

Nicola explained that developing a historical character led to understanding of story. She gained a felt, experienced understanding by internalizing and embodying the circumstances of a story. She experienced contextual circumstances that the characters lived through. She found "bits of myself and my family background" (Interview 2, p. 10) to incorporate into characters and used her imagination and background to help understand them.

According to Luke, the experiential rehearsal process facilitated profound understanding of story and an "incredible level of reality" (Interview 1, p. 8) as he experienced different worlds by portraying characters from a variety of cultures.

For Nicola, the combination of script content and a variety of learning approaches

provided deeper understanding. Multiple learning approaches (i.e., textual, physical, exploratory) facilitated a felt, or experienced, understanding as well as intellectual knowledge, and allowed her to delve deeply into the material. Working on a variety of scripts aided her development.

> Each script is basically the author's voice so the more diverse the scripts you've worked on the more ... diverse the viewpoints you've examined .... I like working with words more than I like working with physical images, but the two cannot be mutually exclusive .... Just the dichotomy between those two aspects is really interesting, and it stretches you, especially working one right after another. (Interview 2, p. 12)

Participants learned about story and context through a variety of aesthetic forms: drama, music, dance, and visual arts. Alan explained that different art forms provided "a deeper meaning" (Interview 2, p. 10) and thus deeper understanding. Stacey suddenly understood a specific character because "something clicked" (Interview 1, p. 5) when she explored that character through movement and music.

Stacey also understood the stories so well because we "worked so hard on things for so long" (Interview 1, p. 4). Alan similarly noted that cocurricular productions allowed more time to understand and remember subject matter than did classroom work, because he had "lived it for that much longer" (Interview 1, p. 6). A single rehearsal was generally longer than a class, and rehearsals extended over a prolonged period of time.

Cognitive Processes: Translation, Transformation, and Ownership of Data

Participants discussed the idea of translating and transforming information and interpretive concepts from textual script to physical design and performance and thus

developing ownership of content. Students learned how to internalize, interpret, and transform words on a page into a variety of communicative modes: voice; movement and gesture; song; and set, costume, and lighting design. "It's not just absorbing information and regurgitating it; you take it and you transform it and you make it your own" (Nicola, Interview 1, p. 5).

Nicola suggested that involvement in theatre built literacy skills based on the need to translate the written word into visual images because "you have to read, you have to become analytical" (Interview 1, p. 7). Luke insisted that rehearsal and design activities promoted a "new way of thinking" (Interview 1, p. 4). For him, a very important aspect of the design and rehearsal process was "translating material from one mode to another" (Interview 2, p. 6) in a dual process of meaning-making and conceptualizing. He discussed the importance of the translation process, and he discovered that, as he broadened his range of interpretive methods, he was better equipped to work within various modes of communication (Interview 2, p. 6).

Participants reported that the translation, transformation, and ownership of material required (a) research, (b) the exploratory nature of rehearsals, (c) a variety of learning modes, (d) aesthetic learning, and (e) responsibility for production tasks. These factors belong to the three contexts of the world of the play, rehearsal and performance practices, and the characteristics of the high school theatre company.

Participants reported that the research they accomplished allowed them to transform data and take ownership of material. According to Alan, research included extensive reading, first person interviews, internet searches, and the study of photos, slide shows, and movies. Alan translated the data gathered in these activities into character

traits, motivations, and goals and transformed them into a physical, embodied performance. He thus took ownership not only of his performance but also of the stories and themes that he found in the scripts. Alan understood that an individual's interpretation and ownership of scripted material combines personal background with both the material and the results of research and exploration and that "the basis of working is your research" (Interview 2, p. 4).

The exploratory nature of rehearsal allowed Alan to transform the data he gathered through his research. During rehearsal, he kept trying to find new solutions or approaches, and if one didn't work, he would simply try another. Remembering rehearsals, he said, "Exploration fills in the spots the research doesn't fill in, but it also [allows you to] manipulate the research in a certain way. And then your interpretation comes out of the research and the exploration" (Interview 2, p. 8).

According to Stacey, investigating the world of the play encompassed process drama activities as well as traditional research. Combining these different learning approaches provided multiple sources of data, which she then transformed into a detailed performance. She "couldn't build a character without doing some sort of research" (Interview 2, p. 5), which she used to inform process drama activities.

Alan and Luke also related a variety of learning modes to the development of their ability to translate, transform, and take ownership of material. Alan asserted that developing musical components of a script represented an "intricate, involved process" (Interview 1, p. 9) that led to his ability to transform data. He needed to focus on music, movement, and words to synthesize his learning from these three different modes, and then translate his understanding into a performance. Luke's experience in a variety of

learning modes equipped him to engage with different ideas in different contexts and to translate from one medium to another. He discussed the value of working in the "overall spectrum of the arts where you're working in different media, different modes of thinking, different materials" (Interview 2, p. 2).

Luke's production work thus contributed to his ability to transform information from one cognitive mode to another. While he was designing and building a set, descriptions of materials and what they could be used for allowed him to translate written language into physical shapes and spaces. Work on various facets of production led to a variety of opportunities for translation and transformation, as he was "challenged to work simultaneously in different modes of thinking" (Interview 2, p. 2; i.e., written language and visual images).

Cognitive Processes: Critical Consciousness and the Inclination to Question

Participants' development of critical thinking processes included the growth of critical consciousness and the inclination to question the status quo. Luke claimed that his involvement in secondary school theatre taught him to know when to "break rules, go against the norm, or push the boundaries" (Interview 1, p. 17) in his own art. Stacey understood that experiences in the arts "raise different questions for different people" (Interview 2, p. 3). She maintained that her experience in high school theatre "made me question" (Interview 1, p. 12) cultural rules in her own life. For Nicola, learning the process of how to ask questions effectively was an important skill, particularly in her current professional life as a news editor, where questioning is key. She claimed that "theatre is all about asking questions" (Interview 2, p. 9) and articulated the value of theatre in the development of critical consciousness.

> Most education is centred around the idea of listening and obeying and not questioning, and theatre makes you question .... I used to think you have to listen, you have to do what you're told, and then you begin to understand that questioning is not dissident, it's not *wrong*, it's necessary to understand anything. (Nicola, Interview 1, p. 7)

Alan learned to challenge rules by posing questions. During a production in which he played a priest who turned in his parishioners to malicious authorities, he questioned: "How did this [atrocity] happen? How did we let it happen?" (Interview 1, p. 8). He also reflected on important figures in his life: "Growing up Catholic, [I believe that] the priest is supposed to be the guy you go to for help. And then [in the play] you go to him for help, and he tries to turn you in?" (Interview 2, p. 5).

Participants identified (a) script content, (b) our investigative approach, (c) the exploratory nature of rehearsals, and (d) the theatre experience itself as factors contributing to their critical consciousness and the inclination to question. The first two factors belong to the context of the world of the play, whereas the last two are factors within the context of rehearsal and performance practices.

Alan felt that script content was pivotal in encouraging his sense of critical inquiry and questioning of the status quo. The material challenged him and influenced him to "want to create change, so when people tell you things you begin to wonder why" (Interview 1, p. 8). According to Stacey, script content was strong, advanced, and mature; it encouraged complex and critical thinking, presented challenges that deepened her experience, caused her to question and notice wrongs in the world around her, and pushed her to go "a step further" (Interview 2, p. 9).

Today, Stacey challenges rules partly because of our approach to the scripts. She valued the creative interpretation of scripts, noting that scripts provide a bare outline, not answers. (Interview 2, p. 6).

In addition to script content and approach, both Luke and Stacey described the exploratory nature of rehearsals as essential in the development of critical awareness; through exploration, they learned that there was "never a single right answer" (Stacey, Interview 2, p. 3) or "one interpretation" (Luke, Interview 2, p.10). Finally, Nicola maintained that the theatre experience itself facilitated the development of critical awareness. She discovered that "the whole point of theatre is to question" (Interview 1, p. 6) and viewed the development of critical awareness as a pivotal skill for anyone involved in a theatrical production.

Cognitive Processes: Creative Thinking and the Development of Imagination

Participants in this study confirmed that participation in secondary school theatre enhanced the development of creativity and imagination. Alan said that rehearsals allowed him to imaginatively interpret material and encouraged him "to create [social] change" (Interview 1, p. 8). Luke spoke of creating his own opinions and direction and of experiencing various "performance elements coming together to create a living work of art" (Interview 1, p. 8). "The act of creating" (Interview 2, p. 13) was what he most valued about the production experience, whether it was a painting, a character, or a set. Nicola explained:

> If you didn't feel like following the traditional line one day, you didn't have to, you could go try something else, and that's where you learn how creative you can

> be, that's where you learn *everything* that you're capable of doing, in that kind of a process. (Nicola, Interview 1, p. 6)

Participants identified (a) the exploratory nature of rehearsals, (b) extensive time spent on each production, and (c) students' responsibility for production elements as factors contributing to the development of imagination and creative thinking. The two final factors are found in the context of the characteristics of the high school theatre company; the first is a factor in the context of rehearsal and performance practices.

The exploratory nature of rehearsals helped participants build creative and imaginative thinking. Alan and Nicola identified the rehearsal process as an exploratory period wherein they could "try to find new things" (Alan, Interview 1, p. 2), take risks and experiment, and discover "how creative [they could] be" (Nicola, Interview 1, p. 6).

The extensive time spent on individual productions allowed participants to apply creative thinking skills to increasingly more difficult and complex tasks. Luke explained that when we developed a production over several months as a part of the Sears Drama Festival, the prolonged time period allowed him to imagine and create a fictional "environment with more and more detail and complexities" (Interview 1, p. 8). Stacey recalled the challenge of working on a production for an extended period of time. This challenge encouraged creative thinking as she continually tried to "develop new aspects of the script and the characters" (Interview 2, p. 12) she played.

Participants maintained that their responsibility for production elements also encouraged creative thinking, as they had to think metaphorically in a variety of cognitive modes. For example, designing and building a set developed Luke's "ability to conceptualize" (Interview 2, p. 9).

Cognitive Skills: Organizational and Analytical Skills

All 4 participants maintained that involvement in high school theatre developed organizational skills. Alan (Interview 2, p. 1), Luke (Interview 1, p. 6), and Stacey (Interview 1, p. 2) claimed to have learned time management skills and the ability to prioritize. Luke spoke of the ability to "manage finances and fundraise" (Interview 1, p. 6). Nicola specified the ability to analyze and organize: "I learned how to analyze ... I learned how to organize .... So now that I'm editing news, I need those skills, the correlation is pretty obvious" (Nicola, Interview 1, p. 7). Luke specifically discussed the growth of analytical skills, claiming that he learned to "critically analyze [not only dramatic] text" (Interview 1, p. 5) but also a variety of print and archival materials related to history and historical events.

Students discussed the growth of organizational and analytical skills as a result of (a) student responsibility for production tasks and (b) the theatre experience itself. The first factor is found within the context of the characteristics of the high school theatre company, whereas the second factor belongs in the context of rehearsal and performance practices. Both Alan and Nicola contributed succinct comments. Alan maintained that the growth of organizational and time management skills grew from the multiplicity of duties inherent in students' responsibility for all aspects of a production, because "when you had so many more roles, there was more stuff to time manage" (Interview 2, p. 1). Nicola explained that the theatre experience itself, which involved analyzing text, sequencing, and time management, "taught [her] how to break things down" (Interview 2, p. 3) both analytically and organizationally.

Cognitive Skills: Research Skills

Both Nicola and Luke developed generic research skills. Nicola learned to research for the "more meaningful aspects" (Interview 2, p. 3) of scripts, and Luke explained that the intensity of the preproduction research he accomplished transformed him into a conceptual artist. "I was only really able to effectively conceptualize and communicate ideas in terms of visual arts by using the techniques I had learned in theatre, the research especially" (Luke, Interview 2, p. 9).

The factors contributing to the development of research skills were (a) the investigations of historical scripts and (b) the exploratory nature of rehearsals. The first factor is a part of the context of the world of the play; the second is a factor of the context of rehearsal and performance practices. Luke claimed that the research involved in exploring and interpreting a script taught him research skills (Interview 2, p. 9), and Nicola suggested that rehearsals themselves modelled a process of research and investigation (Interview 2, p. 3).

Cognitive Skills: Theatre and Drama Skills

The growth of theatre and drama skills, particularly the ability to role play, requires cognitive processes and skills. All participants reported that they "learned how to act" (Alan, Interview 1, p. 2; i.e., play a character). The ability to role play, or to play a character, is a cognitive skill involving the ability to simultaneously operate as self and other.

Participants also built knowledge and skills related to a range of theatre concepts, procedures, and skills. Alan learned to design and realize a lighting plot and also gained an understanding of theatrical style and genre. Overall, he learned "to relate style to the

meaning of a play" (Interview 1, p. 9). Designing and building a set taught Luke "skills relevant to his present career" (Interview 1, p. 4) as a learning technologies consultant. "The very basic elements of theatre" (Interview 1, p. 7) built linguistic and storytelling skills for Nicola, who is currently a news editor.

As factors contributing to the development of theatre and drama skills, participants credited (a) script content, (b) a focus on research, (c) responsibility for production tasks, (d) process drama activities, and (e) extensive time spent on individual productions. These factors holistically reflect all three contexts of the world of the play, rehearsal and performance practices, and the characteristics of the high school theatre company.

Participants first discussed the value of script content in developing theatre and drama skills. Alan, for example, studied each script to find and develop character objectives and ways of achieving them. Working with scripts, as opposed to devising original scenes, gave him time "to develop skills to create a character" (Interview 1, p. 5).

Second, a focus on research enhanced theatre and drama skills. Luke, who currently freelances as a visual artist, credited increased design skills to skills he acquired in high school theatre, particularly through "the strong foundation in research" (Interview 2, p. 9).

Third, student responsibility for production tasks developed theatre and drama skills. Alan maintained that creating a lighting design meant that he had to understand and realize a style, understand instruments and angles, and mine resources. Building sets additionally led to Alan's "carpentry skills" (Interview 2, p. 8). Luke's work on set design and construction taught him about "critically analyz[ing] a text" (Interview 2, p. 3) and

theatre style. Working on costume design and realization taught Stacey to interpret scripts and define theatrical specifics of "each character and situation" (Interview 2, p. 11).

Fourth, participants associated process drama activities with the development of theatre and drama skills. For example, Stacey reported that process drama helped her learn "to act" (Interview 1, p. 2), and Alan explained that process drama activities taught dramaturgy and its relationship to the characterization process by "connecting everything" (Interview 2, p. 8).

Finally, participants associated prolonged engagement in individual productions with the development of theatre and drama skills. For example, Alan noted that cocurricular productions allowed more time to create characters and develop theatre skills than he had "in 76-minute drama classes" (Interview 1, p. 6).

Physical Skills and the Mind-Body Connection

Participants noted that work in the high school theatre company increased their physical skills. Rehearsals and performance gave Luke both "physical control and an understanding of body language" (Interview 1, p. 14). Stacey and Nicola claimed that rehearsals allowed them to explore physically and thus "increase [their] comfort level" (Stacey, Interview 1, p. 6) with their own physicality. Nicola further explained, "You have to be every bit as physically trained as an athlete if you're going to work in theatre ... you can't pursue it for any length of time without learning about your body" (Nicola, Interview 2, p 7).

Study participants also identified an enhanced mind-body connection through the experience of embodiment. Embodiment is a form of knowing and understanding, and the ability to embody is a developed skill. Through embodiment, Alan, Stacey, and Luke

developed an understanding of both characters and events. Alan explained, "You're actually *doing* it, you are, in [the character]" (Alan, Interview 1, p. 6). Stacey remembered that "physically being the character" (Interview 1, p. 6) ensured that she understood the character. Luke maintained that he "could only experience the elements of the world of the play in a physical way" (Interview 1, p. 16) through a combination of aesthetic, auditory, and sensory experiences.

Participants in this study identified the experiential nature of rehearsal, a factor in the context of rehearsal and performance practices, as a major element contributing to their development of physical skills and their ability to embody a character. Stacey further explained that, as a kinesthetic person, she learned "through physical activity more than through reading or listening" (Interview 1, p. 6). Conversely, Nicola, who was not primarily a kinesthetic person, suggested that rehearsals established a "mind-body connection" (Interview 1, p. 7). They promoted physical learning for her and forced her to work physically, outside her comfort zone.

Summary of Cognitive Development, Contributing Factors, and Contexts

Participants reported cognitive development in the general area of knowledge and understanding, and more specifically in their understanding of context and story and awareness of global and historical issues. They attributed this facet of their growth primarily to their work on specific scripts, a factor within the context of the world of the play.

Participants also reported the development of specific cognitive processes and skills. They increased their ability to translate and transform facts and concepts into various modes of expression and learned to ask critical questions and challenge rules.

They spoke of increased organizational skills, analytical and research skills, creativity, and imagination.

All 4 participants built role-playing and performance skills as well as knowledge of theatre concepts and procedures. Finally, they discussed the growth of physical skills and the mind-body connection. Factors leading to participants' cognitive development came from all three contexts. The most often cited factor was students' responsibility for production tasks, an element within the context of the characteristics of the high school theatre company. Table 3 delineates cognitive developmental outcomes as well as the contributing factors and contexts.

Unanticipated Findings

I initially formulated my first research question because I anticipated that any participant growth associated with the high school theatre experience would be in the areas of personal, social, and cognitive development. However, interview transcripts uncovered two unanticipated findings: the growth of common attitudes and value systems and the long-lasting life influences of participants' involvement in high school theatre.

In the high school theatre company, study participants became involved in a community of working practice, wherein they developed shared attitudes and values. These attitudes and values encompassed notions of (a) a strong work ethic, (b) the power of process, (c) the power of the group, (d) the value of research, (e) respect for the material and the process, (f) a concern for social justice, and (g) proactivity and agency.

Attitudes and Values: Work Ethic

Participation in high school theatre developed participants' strong work ethic. Nicola's work ethic improved slowly over her years of participation as she learned to

Table 3

Summary of Cognitive Developmental Outcomes, Contributing Factors, and Contexts

Developmental outcome	Contributing factors	Context
Knowledge and understanding: development of global and historical awareness	Script content	World of the play
	Experiential nature of rehearsals	Rehearsal and performance practices
	Investigative approach	
	Multiyear involvement	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
	Production responsibilities	
Knowledge and understanding: deeper understanding of context and story	Relationship to a character	World of the play
	Experiential nature of rehearsals	Rehearsal and performance practices
	Variety of cognitive modes	
	Aesthetic learning	
	Extensive time on task	Characteristics of the high school theatre company

(table continues)

Developmental outcome	Contributing factors	Context
Cognitive processes: translation transformation, and ownership of data	Research	World of the play
	Exploratory nature of rehearsals	Rehearsal and performance practices
	Variety of cognitive modes	
	Aesthetic learning	
	Production responsibilities	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
Cognitive processes: critical consciousness and the inclination to question	Script content	World of the play
	Investigative approach	
	Exploratory nature of rehearsals	Rehearsal and performance practices
	The theatre experience	
Cognitive processes: creative thinking, development of imagination	Exploratory nature of rehearsals	Rehearsal and performance practices
	Extensive time on task	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
	Production responsibilities	

(table continues)

Developmental outcome	Contributing factors	Context
Cognitive skills: organizational and analytical skills	Production responsibilities	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
	The theatre experience	Rehearsal and performance practices
Cognitive skills: research skills	Investigative approach	World of the play
	Exploratory nature of rehearsals	Rehearsal and performance practices
Cognitive skills: theatre and drama skills	Script content	World of the play
	Focus on research	
	Production responsibilities	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
	Extensive time on task	
	Process drama activities	Rehearsal and performance practices
Physical skills and the mind-body connection	Experiential nature of rehearsals	Rehearsal and performance practices

commit herself to projects and discovered that "talent, passion and determined pursuit of a goal" (Interview 1, p. 3) promote success. Luke grew to understand not only that he derived no benefit from an experience whenever his level of commitment dropped but also that hard work can be fun. The rehearsal process "gave me an early sense of the responsibility and commitment that I needed to succeed" (Interview 1, p. 6). Alan learned, "You have to do something until you can do it right" (Interview 2, p. 8), and Stacey proposed, "The biggest lesson for me, the most valuable lesson, was learning that the more you put into something, the better results you get" (Interview 1, p. 4).

Factors contributing to the development of a strong work ethic included (a) the company ethos, (b) students' responsibility for production tasks, (c) rehearsal and repetition, and (d) accomplishment and experience of success. Thus, a strong work ethic developed from a balanced interplay between two contextual categories: the characteristics of the high school theatre company and rehearsal and performance practices.

According to Nicola, the idea that students were responsible for results of their work, a commonly shared tenet of the company ethos, contributed to the development of her work ethic.

> Because, when you get right down to it, it's not going to work unless you make it work. So you can't just sit there thinking, "Someone's going to come along and fix this" .... You really learned that you were directly responsible for what you were putting out in the production. (Interview 2, p. 3)

Nonperformance-oriented production work added to Alan's standards for refinement and polish because he wanted the production to appear "finished and

professional" (Interview 2, p. 8). Stacey recalled that the time and effort expended on production tasks led to tangible accomplishments (Interview 1, p. 4).

As an element of rehearsal and performance practices, the repetition, refinement, and polishing of rehearsals created a strong work ethic and set high standards to strive for. Stacey came to understand that the final product was "what a lot of time and effort looks like" (Interview 2, p. 11). Luke discovered that rehearsals established "standards that are critical" (Interview 2, p. 12) to success, and Alan remembered that high standards were "just good for everyday life" (Interview 2, p. 8).

All participants attributed the experience of success and high standards of achievement as a factor in developing their strong work ethic. Stacey summarized the importance of the company's high expectations:

> We knew what was expected from us, and you start to expect it from yourself. But unless those standards are expected from you, you don't develop them .... The other [skills] will come in time, they happen naturally if you place your expectations high enough. (Interview 2, p. 9)

Attitudes and Values: The Power of Process

Participants learned to value an exploratory process, both in terms of direct engagement with theatrical material and in the metacognitive discovery of the value of process in general. Luke valued rehearsal procedures that "nurtured feedback from one another" (Interview 1, p. 15), and Alan valued a safe learning process that "allowed for exploration and interpretation" (Interview 1, p. 3). Nicola learned that a process itself teaches, and it was "the investigative and exploratory process" (Interview 1, p. 2) of rehearsals that she valued most about production. In rehearsal, both Nicola (Interview 1,

p. 5) and Alan (Interview 1, p. 2) learned to try a variety of tactics until they found something that worked for them. Both continue to value an exploratory process in daily life as well as at work. Stacey explained that if scripts are approached through an exploratory rehearsal process, they increase understanding of people and relationships. As a drama and music teacher today, she is "very much about the process. What's the process involved, and what did you learn from that process?" (Interview 2, p. 8).

Respect for the power of process was brought about by the company ethos and students' responsibility for production tasks. Both factors relate directly to the characteristics of the high school theatre company.

Nicola explained the connection between an exploratory process and a tenet of the company ethos that students respect script content, build its meaning, and tell its story. "It was really important to me that we all as a company recognized the fact that we were doing something deeper [than staging] and that our process helped us to look at the more meaningful aspect of what we were doing as opposed to just showmanship" (Interview 2, p. 3).

Responsibility for production work taught students to value process. Stacey, for example, learned that in order to understand and develop any project, theatrical or nontheatrical, it is necessary to "take part in many areas" (Interview 2, p. 11) of the project.

Attitudes and Values: The Power of the Group

Through a sense of community, a factor within the context of the characteristics of the high school theatre company, participants came to value the collective power of a group. Alan described the experience of working with others for a common goal

(Interview 2, p. 8), Nicola discussed "the different learning styles" (Interview 1, p. 3) and synergistic diversity of students involved, Stacey highlighted the importance of "comfort and a sense of belonging" (Interview 2, p. 4), and Luke highlighted the notion of empowerment through community.

> What I found was a sense of community, and that sense of community was empowering .... I think that the whole school felt it ... because our drama program was such a strong community, and because of the amount of camaraderie in that program, it spilled out all over the school into other programs. (Luke, Interview 1, pp. 10-11)

Attitudes and Values: The Value of Research

Through research activities, a factor within the context of the world of the play, participants discovered the importance of seeking additional resources in order to produce effective results. While developing research skills, Nicola, Alan, and Luke also developed an appreciation of the value of research itself. Nicola reported that she "loved the research" (Interview 1, p. 2), and her passion for research carried through to her theatre work at university. Luke contended that research "built a broad knowledge base ... and turned me into a conceptual artist" (Interview 1, p. 15). Alan described the importance of research not only in developing characters whose lived experience was different from his own, but also in his personal development as well.

> [Research] makes you realize as a teenager that the world does not revolve around you, that much more is happening than you could ever really imagine in your 16 years of life, that maybe the most important thing is not the blue jeans that you are looking to buy. (Alan, Interview 1, p. 7)

Attitudes and Values: Respect for the Material and the Investigative Process

Participants developed respect for the material and the investigative process. Stacey affirmed her belief in the educational value of exploring scripts, especially when they depict "real events" (Interview 2, p. 6). Rehearsal and performance taught Alan (Interview 1, p. 7) and Nicola (Interview 1, p. 12) to respect the larger themes underlying the words of the script. Luke learned that universal issues and implications inherent in a script are more important than its plot line.

> I was taught to treat the text always with a level of respect, because most of the work that we did dealt with things that were more than just the characters in the production. It was about a larger concept that could touch more people than just [the participants]. (Interview 1, p. 14)

Related to the context of the characteristics of the theatre company, participants credited their multiyear involvement with the development of respect for the material and the process. Alan (Interview 1, p. 8), Luke (Interview 1, p. 14), and Stacey (Interview 1, p. 9) described this development as continuous growth, whereas Nicola realized "the responsibility of telling someone's story effectively" (Interview 2, p. 13) in later years of involvement, after laying the foundation in her earlier participation.

Attitudes and Values: Concern for Social Justice.

The content of scripts increased participants' global and historical awareness. This awareness, coupled with the development of critical questioning skills, led to a growing interest in social justice. Alan, for example, reported that productions that increased his knowledge of world events also encouraged him to "realize you need to do something" (Interview 1, p. 8) for the benefit of society.

Stacey transferred the ethical questions posed in scripts to "today's perspective" (Interview 1, p. 10) and real-life situations. Luke developed a greater realization of how fortunate he was and a greater understanding of his place in the world context. He highlighted the ethical power of storytelling; he felt a responsibility to tell the story of people or cultures portrayed in scripts and found this responsibility to be "empowering and enlightening" (Interview 1, p. 17). Nicola began to consider what she could do about injustice. "[A specific play] really sparked a streak of activism in me. I'd always been angered by injustice but I had never really thought about what you could do about it" (Nicola, Interview 2, p. 11).

Participants attributed their interest in social justice to (a) script content, (b) their personal investment, and (c) research. Students' personal investment is a factor within the context of the characteristics of the high school theatre company, whereas the other two factors are found in the context of the world of the play.

Stacey still remembers instances of injustice involved in the plays and the thoughts and feelings they evoked (Interview 1, p. 1). Nicola and Alan recalled that the content of the scripts dealt with experiences in other cultures, at other times. Alan connected his increased awareness of world events at that time to his current interest in addressing injustice and his desire "to create change" (Interview 1, p. 8). Script content built Nicola's awareness of the larger world and of history; it forced her to think about issues that she otherwise wouldn't have considered, and she became interested in "the plight of people around [her]" (Interview 1, p. 6). Scripts became the base for experimentation and decisions, and the subject matter invited her to question both the way things are and why. In discussing two separate plays, she described their subject

matter as different and yet similar. Although the specific situations differed, "the current that runs through these shows is that these are unjust situations that people had to survive" (Interview 2, p. 12). Nicola recalled that she was telling these stories in order to reveal injustices.

Participants' personal investment in the script content also led to increased interest in social justice. Alan's personal investment made the content "that much more meaningful" (Interview 1, p. 7), created a change in his worldview, and motivated him to create social change. Nicola empathized with other lives and time periods, related to the characters she played, and wanted desperately to master the material and tell the story. Today, she remains passionate about the power of storytelling to contribute to social justice. The act of telling someone's story "became so vital to me ... it became a part of me" (Interview 1, p. 4). Luke discussed the investment of self, explaining that he experienced a level of commitment to the material that he'd never had before, that he became emotionally involved in the material, and "felt a responsibility to the [play's] people, the culture ... their story" (Interview 1, p. 17).

Research secondarily contributed to participants' growing interest in social justice. For example, it was research that taught Alan that issues illuminated in the scripts were still affecting people. That knowledge lent an "importance and authenticity" (Interview 1, p. 7) to the work and sparked a concern for addressing injustice.

Attitudes and Values: Proactivity and Agency

Closely tied to a developing interest in social justice was the growth of proactivity and agency. Participants remembered that, as a result of their participation in high school theatre, they became more aware of "how things work in the world" (Luke, Interview 2,

p. 5) and how changes could be made. Consequently, they became more active in issues affecting the school and the community.

Nicola chose to be "active in trying to fix problems that need to be addressed" (Interview 1, p. 11). Luke developed a more "global perspective" (Interview 2, p. 8), and "a responsibility to give a little something hopefully to the people who might not have it so good" (Interview 1, p. 17). Stacey will "challenge the rules [if] ... something isn't right" (Interview 1, p. 12). Alan explained,

> The plays ... were histories, so your understanding of the world begins to grow because the world's not just [the high school]. You realize that things are happening [throughout the world] ... and it's not right sometimes ... so you start to think of how you can make a difference .... You realize that you need to be doing something, to use the time that you have to make some sort of difference, be it great or small, but you need to do something. (Interview 1, p. 8)

Factors contributing to proactivity and agency were script content and investigative approach, and the sense of company community. Thus, the development of proactivity and agency was the result of the interplay between the contexts of the world of the script and the characteristics of the high school theatre company.

Luke recalled that most script content involved universal themes that could touch both production participants and audiences. Script content definitely contributed to his sense of agency.

> It starts at the text level .... It's because we find something that is bigger than ourselves in that, there's a challenge there .... It challenged us to understand something beyond ourselves. And once we had been immersed in that

> environment, it enabled us to come back to our own lives and have a different context in which to stand back and look at our own [circumstances]. And ... then we started to question our own situations, our own governments, our own relationships with other people, our own values, our own moral structures. (Interview 2, pp. 7-8)

Both Alan and Luke believed that a sense of community was important in building a sense of agency. Alan viewed the length of time that students "spent together at the school" (Interview 1, p. 8) during productions as a factor in their advocacy for the school, and Luke concisely reported that "the strong community that the [theatre] company had created a sense of agency" (Interview 2, p. 8).

Long-Lasting Life Influence

The second unanticipated research finding dealt with the long-lasting life influence of participants' involvement in the high school theatre company. All participants claimed that their prolonged experience continues to influence their lives and careers today. According to Nicola, "If you took away the experiences that I had while I was in theatre in high school, I would be entirely different than I am now. And that's it" (Interview 1, p. 6). The confidence she gained from being cast in productions gave her "a foundation for the rest of my life." She is grateful that she had the opportunity as a teenager to explore a subject that she loved, and she is still committed to finding work she can pursue with passion, as "getting to find what you're passionate about in life is really important" (Interview 2, p. 5). Nicola credited high school theatre with building work-related skills she uses in her career as a news editor: her ability to read critically, involve herself in content, and analyze material (Interview 1, p. 7).

Luke directly linked long-term personal growth with the development of employment skills. "The way I learned [in the high school theatre company] empowered me to make my own decisions later on, equipped me with the tools I needed to succeed in any field [and developed] the drive I need to do what I want to do" (Interview 1, p. 4). In discussing his current position as a University Learning Technologies Consultant, he referred to developing, through rehearsals and design projects, his ability to interpret and "translate information ... and concepts, using appropriate media or language" (Interview 1, p. 6).

Today a drama and music teacher, Stacey described the lasting effects of high school theatre involvement. "It's affected the way I present myself, the way I think about things; I have more confidence in myself. It's what I've chosen to do; it's part of my career" (Interview 1, p. 3). In a direct way, she uses the theatre techniques she learned in her own current teaching. The long-term influence of Stacey's participation in high school theatre is very potent: (a) she is still involved with friends she made in the program, (b) she currently performs with a theatre company, and (c) she has chosen to become a high school drama and music teacher. Her experience with high school theatre also informs her pedagogy. "You approach characters and plays in different ways, and because of that I approach my students in different ways ... I see every student as an individual, and I see that they work at things differently" (Interview 2, p. 8).

Alan stressed long-term personal growth, especially the development of enduring confidence. He continued to participate in theatre after high school, and majored in drama in university. Perhaps of most relevance, as a special education teacher, he uses drama techniques with his students and has suggested to his school administration that

drama become part of an integrated curriculum initiative. He wants to include drama in an interdisciplinary credit, believing that, as a hands-on, enjoyable learning medium, it would be especially appropriate for students with different learning styles. Alan uses role-play with his at-risk students to help them develop appropriate emotional responses to situations, such as those involving perceived rudeness. The students "respond well to role-play" (Interview 1, p. 10), and it has produced some positive out-of-class effects.

Summary of Unexpected Findings, Contributing Factors, and Contexts

Participants ascribed the growth of positive attitudes and values to participation in the high school theatre company. These included (a) the development of a strong work ethic, (b) recognition of the power of process, (c) recognition of the power of a group, (d) recognition of the value of research, (e) respect for the material, (f) an increased concern for social justice, and (g) enhanced proactivity and agency. Two thirds of the factors contributing to the development of attitudes and values cluster within the context of the characteristics of the high school theatre company: participation in a community of practice, the company ethos, extensive time spent on individual productions, multiyear involvement, accomplishments and the experience of success, and students' responsibility for production tasks. In the context of rehearsal and performance practices, the exploratory nature of rehearsals, participation in process drama activities, and repetition through rehearsal were important developmental factors. In the context of the world of the play, script content, an investigative approach, and a focus on research were other important factors. Table 4 delineates attitudes and values developed by the participants, as well as the contributing factors and contexts.

Finally, participants claimed that the effects of participating in high school theatre

Table 4

Summary of Attitudes and Values, Contributing Factors, and Contexts

Attitudes and values	Contributing factors	Context
A strong work ethic	The company ethos	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
	Production responsibilities	
	Accomplishments, success	
	Rehearsals and repetition	Rehearsal and performance practices
The power of process	The company ethos	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
	Production responsibilities	
The power of the group	Sense of community	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
The value of research	Research activities	World of the play

(table continues)

Attitudes and values	Contributing factors	Context
Respect for the material and the investigative process	Multiyear involvement	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
Concern for social justice	Script content	World of the play
	Research activities	
	Students' personal investment	Characteristics of the high school theatre company
Proactivity and agency	Script content	World of the play
	Investigative approach	
	Sense of community	Characteristics of the high school theatre company

were long-lasting and continue to influence their current lives. All four described ways in which increased confidence has shaped what they've accomplished since high school and identified ways in which the knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed through their participation in the high school theatre company contribute to their current careers.

Major Findings

This study of adolescents participating in a cocurricular theatre program has yielded six major findings.

1. Participants identified wide-ranging benefits from their participation in high school theatre. They reported growth in the areas of personal, social, and cognitive development as well as in the area of attitudes and value systems.
2. Participants described enduring benefit from their high school theatre experience, which continues to influence them.
3. Process drama and rehearsing/performing in a theatrical production were interdependent and mutually reinforcing aspects of student development across all domains.
4. Mature script content dealing with historical 19th and 20th century events outside the students' lived experiences was very important in developing global citizenship, critical thinking processes, and interest in social justice.
5. Characteristics of the high school theatre company included extended time on task, multiyear involvement, responsibility for production tasks, high expectations and standards, and a strong sense of community. Participants valued and internalized the company ethos and attributed much of their development to their involvement in this particular organization.

6. The complex interweaving of three specific contexts (the world of the play, rehearsal and performance practices, and characteristics of the high school theatre company) created conditions for a cohesive and positive group atmosphere that supported students in multifaceted areas of growth.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has attempted to fill a void in the existing drama education literature on the educational value of secondary school theatre and to privilege the voice of students previously involved in a high school theatre company. Existing literature has tended to focus on the benefits of non-performance-oriented classroom drama, commonly expressed in theoretical rather than research-based empirical terms. The purpose of this study has been to elucidate, through qualitative inquiry, 4 former high school students' perceptions of their personal, social, and cognitive development through prolonged participation in a high school theatre company as well as specific factors that led to this development. This chapter summarizes the findings, relates them to relevant literature, and suggests implications for theory and practice. It concludes with suggestions for future research.

Summary

Because learning in drama is individualistic, emergent, and not necessarily immediately visible, I chose to focus this study on the voices of 4 young adults who had been long-term participants in a high school theatre program. The study's participants (2 male and 2 female) had taken part in the rehearsal and performance of published scripts between the years 1996 and 2001. Although participants' experiences overlap, as a group they do not represent one specific production cast. Instead, they provide an overview of six consecutive years of production of published scripts. The scripts were all based on 19th and 20th century historical events, all lay outside the traditional high school Western canon, and all dealt with content outside the lived experience of the students.

Participants varied in terms of academic and family backgrounds: Alan was a strong musician and athlete, whose family had lived in the area for many years; Luke was an athlete, artist, student cabinet member, and the first generation Canadian son of a politically involved family of French and Italian background; Nicola was a quiet, shy, academically strong student, the first generation Canadian daughter of a family of Eastern European background; Stacey was a French immersion and music student who was attracted to the theatre company as a form of social group and whose family had lived in the area for only a few years.

I interviewed Alan, Luke, Nicola, and Stacey individually, first using open-ended questions common to all participants. I then conducted a second set of interviews, using personalized questions for each participant, designed to explore issues raised in the initial interviews.

I used a three-stage data analysis process. I initially coded data from the first interviews for perceived development and causal factors; then for explicit personal, social, and cognitive development and specific rehearsal and performance practices leading to that development; and finally for specific developmental and causal factors, using the participants' own words as codes.

I then generated questions for and conducted the second set of interviews and repeated the same three-stage data analysis process. I then collapsed the 97 specific codes generated across both interview sets into discrete categories.

The completed coding process revealed unanticipated findings. Participants attributed growth outside my initial framework (i.e., personal, social, and cognitive development) to their participation in the theatre company. I thus expanded my focus to

include (a) the long-term life influence of participants' experiences and (b) the development of enduring attitudes and values. I also discovered that factors influencing students' development consisted of more than procedural rehearsal and performance practices. They also included both the world of the plays we worked on and abiding characteristics of the high school theatre company itself. I labelled as contexts rehearsal and performance practices, the world of the play, and characteristics of the high school theatre company and assigned developmental factors to each one. I was now able to link perceived development to both factors and their contexts.

Participants' Perceptions of Development

Participants reported personal development in the areas of self-knowledge, confidence, self-acceptance, awareness of potential, and the ability to cope. Socially, participants highlighted the development of interpersonal skills as well as the ability to collaborate toward a common goal. Cognitively, students gained knowledge and understanding of historical and global issues. They developed cognitive processes of transformation and ownership of data. They acquired critical consciousness and the inclination to question, as well as enhanced creative and imaginative thinking. They reported a growth in organizational and analytical skills, research skills, and theatre and drama skills. They discovered the connection between mind and body and described a kinesthetic and embodied way of learning that allowed them to (a) act from within a character's situation, (b) explore physicality and physical characteristics, (c) develop physical control and an understanding of body language, and (d) physically experience a script. Personal, social, and cognitive development were interrelated and interdependent

phenomena; the simultaneous nature of growth in all three areas was a developmental factor in itself.

In addition to personal, social, and cognitive development, participants acquired enduring attitudes and values from their participation in school-based theatre. Specifically, they developed (a) a strong work ethic, (b) an appreciation of the power of the group, (c) great respect for the material on which they were working, (d) a concern for social justice, (e) an appreciation of the power of process, (f) an understanding of the value of research, and (g) a sense of proactivity and agency.

Finally, participants described the lasting life influences of their involvement in high school theatre. In particular, they related specific skills and processes from high school theatre to their current career choices and success.

Discussion

For Alan, Luke, Nicola, and Stacey, participation in high school theatre produced both wide-ranging and enduring developmental benefits. These benefits were achieved through three distinct but interrelated contexts: (a) rehearsal and performance practices, (b) the world of the play, and (c) the characteristics of the high school theatre company.

Rehearsal and performance practices combined the exploratory and experiential nature of process drama activities with the discipline and demands of theatre production to influence participants' personal development and a range of cognitive processes and skills. Nontraditional script content and the research necessary to make and communicate the meaning of the worlds of the plays influenced participants' personal and cognitive development as well as their attitudes and value systems.

A surprising finding was the life importance participants placed on the characteristics of the high school theatre company, a school-based program that functioned outside the requirements of curriculum documents and standardized testing. Mitchell and Sackney (2009) argued that most schools operate as managed systems in which teaching and learning are "controlled, managed, and inscribed by complicated designs enshrined in tightly codified curriculum documents" and educational work is "homogenized, routinized, controlled, and counted" (p. 6). They proposed that schools should operate as living systems that "self-organize and change in response to the feedback they receive from their environments but still retain the integrity of their purpose and meaning" (p. 4). As a cocurricular program, the high school theatre company developed internally motivated standards and outcomes imposed neither from outside nor above; its structure and activities emerged from and reflected context-specific needs and purposes. The selection of material occurred as a result of staff/student consultation, and with each new script, cast and crew were enlisted to meet new demands; schedules were devised to accommodate the work required; students assumed various leadership positions as needed. The company functioned as a living system, responding to the needs and goals of its participants. Despite the lack of externally imposed curriculum, standards, and testing, participants reported deep and enduring learning outcomes.

Participants highlighted several characteristics of the living system that contributed to their growth. Participants repeatedly mentioned the company ethos, "the way we worked," as important to their development. They both contributed to and assimilated the company's values and attitudes and continue to work in accordance with them.

One very important aspect of "the way we worked" involved the students' responsibility for production tasks, including set design and construction and costume, prop, lighting, and sound design and realization. Responsibility for production tasks (a) developed the ability to conceptualise; (b) encouraged teamwork and time management skills; (c) entailed different modes of thinking and application; (d) helped reveal the world of the script; and (e) built standards for refinement and polish.

High standards initially drew participants to the theatre company and provided a model of success. Meeting the standards subsequently developed self-confidence, offered a sense of accomplishment, taught the value of high expectations, and provided procedural examples.

The content of scripts chosen collaboratively by students and teacher encouraged a personal investment in the material and process. Participants became motivated to give voice to people, through the roles they played, and to create social change, as they empathized with characters, time periods, and themes.

The living system of the theatre company allowed participants to develop and maintain a strong and inclusive community with a great deal of supportive and motivating camaraderie. Participants emphasized (a) the comfort that comes from knowing that you have a place to go with people you like, (b) the empowerment that accompanies a sense of affiliation, (c) the power of common goals and commitment, and (d) the lasting friendships established. Students could let go of inhibitions and take personal and emotional risks in a safe and friendly environment where people respected and trusted one another. Accountability to the people and projects in this community fostered participants' development.

The living system of the high school theatre company was not constricted by school timetabling issues. Because we were a cocurricular company, we could schedule our time according to the needs of participants and the material, and students could participate in the company throughout their high school years. Prolonged time spent on each production allowed students to develop a quality approach and take on increasingly difficult and complex tasks. Extensive time on task helped students understand and remember subject matter, forced them to keep exploring, and taught that a strong work ethic leads to success. Multiyear involvement allowed participants to build positive self-perceptions, attitudes, and ways of working; to develop expertise, build confidence, and assume leadership positions. Prolonged engagement allowed them to build enduring friendships, expanded their knowledge of many world issues, and led them to an acceptance and internalization of the company's value systems.

Implications for Theory

Before embarking on this study, I was concerned and conflicted by the drama-theatre debate. McLeod (1989) posited that the separation of drama and theatre has been the most persistent debate in the history of dramatic arts in education. Certainly the tension between focusing on theatrical performance and using drama for students' personal, social, and cognitive development was a theoretical dichotomy that I tried to make sense of throughout my teaching career. Most drama in education scholars (Booth, 2005; Heathcote, 2008; Slade, 1954; Way, 1967) discussed educational outcomes in the context of non-performance-based classroom drama, whereas Hornbrook (1995) lamented process drama's lack of focus on the "legitimate business of drama" (p. 83), which he described as making, performing, and watching plays.

In this study, participants reported that the combination of theatrical production and drama in education (process drama) strategies led to a rich educational experience. Their statements lend empirical evidence to theoretical assumptions that (a) process drama strategies promote personal and social development (Slade, 1954; Way, 1967), (b) drama can be used as a teaching method for cognitive gains (Bolton, 1984; Heathcote, 2004; O'Neill, 1995), and (c) *metaxis* (a state of consciousness that holds two worlds in the mind simultaneously) and embodiment promote learning (Boal, 2002; Bolton, 1984; O'Toole, 1992). However, whereas scholars have commonly discussed educative outcomes in the context of nonperformative classroom settings, and Hornbook (1995) has implied process drama's absence in the making and performing of plays, participants in this study revealed that the use of process drama strategies in the rehearsal of published scripts promoted wide-ranging development. Participants also identified both the theatre experience and performing for an audience as factors in their growth. They perceived their development as the result of rehearsal and performance practices in which drama and theatre processes were interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

The study supports suggestions that theatre has the potential to teach beyond its discipline-based skills (Hundert, 1996, McLauchlan, 2008), and specifically supports Doyle's (1993) call for critical drama pedagogy through the use of scripted plays. In this study, the rehearsal and production of published scripts facilitated analytical and critical thinking skills, an interest in social justice, and the growth of proactivity and agency. Participants credited script content and subject matter as factors in building these skills. Script content caused them to question social conditions. Strong, advanced, and mature material encouraged complex and critical thinking and presented challenges that

deepened the educative experience. The process of script analysis and exploration encouraged a questioning and challenging of hegemonic norms.

Analyzing the data in this study led me to realize that I direct productions differently in educational settings than I do in community-based adult theatre. For me, the primary goal of school-based theatre is the development and empowerment of students. From auditions onward, aims and processes of educational theatre diverge from those of conventional theatre. At auditions, professional and community theatres look for actors who can mine a text, create a character, and work collaboratively. High school theatre does not audition for these qualities but rather seeks to develop them in students. As educators, drama teachers want students to think critically, see implications, and develop their own points of view. The notion that theatre can address something beyond the form itself and promote human development is echoed in the growing body of literature on Applied Theatre (AT; Ackroyd, 2000). As a direction for future research, AT might provide a robust theoretical framework for educational theatre, embracing high school theatre as one of its forms and encouraging the development of its own base of knowledge and body of literature.

For many years while teaching high school theatre, I searched for literature about adolescents' rehearsal and performance of published scripts, and found none. As a teacher, I was caught in a professional development version of what Eisner (2002) called the "null curriculum, [which] constitutes what is absent ... what [we] never have the opportunity to learn" (p. 159). Since beginning this investigation, I have found a very small number of articles dealing with adolescents' performance of published scripts. Two of them (Chapman, 2000; Cruise & Sewell, 2000) proposed that characterization can

affect the development of adolescent identity. This study supports that claim and also explores the attitudes of teenaged participants toward characters they considered positive or negative, similar to or different from themselves. For these participants, the characterization process promoted deep personal reflection, especially in the areas of values and beliefs.

According to Eisner (2002), "acts of omission can be as significant as acts of commission" (p. 159); for me, the absence of literature dealing with adolescents' rehearsal and performance of published scripts was troubling. I perceived that scholars saw little educational value in this work; however, my own experience indicated that students might be achieving developmental gains. The 4 participants in this thesis attributed several benefits to their work with published scripts. The stories of Alan, Luke, Nicola, and Stacy reveal the value of exploring students' points of view.

Finally, this study relates to Catterall's (2002) suggestion that work in high school drama and theatre may produce deep and long-lasting effects. Findings identify specific gains and explicit factors that contributed to student development as well as the growth of shared value systems. For study participants, effects were profound and long-lasting, suggesting a need for more studies of adolescents involved in high school theatre and more longitudinal studies of teenagers involved in drama and theatre.

Implications for Education

Internationally, hundreds of thousands of students are involved annually in high school productions mounted outside classroom time as cocurricular or extracurricular events. By identifying developmental gains associated with high school theatre participation and specific factors promoting these gains, we can begin to understand the

educational value of theatre performance and build examples of effective educational processes.

Implications associated with standardized testing and highly structured curriculum documents are a real and present concern for today's schools. This thesis investigated a school program that functioned outside these parameters. Built on the individuality of participants, the high school theatre company developed standards and outcomes that were internally motivated and designed its structure and activities on the basis of context-specific needs and purpose. By operating as a living system (Mitchell & Sackney, 2009, p. 4), the high school theatre company produced deep and long-term developmental outcomes for students. The study provides empirical evidence of the value of emergent teaching and learning approaches. This study has documented ways in which a cocurricular theatre program can engage students and build school community.

Future Research

This study has provided an overview of student development in a specific cocurricular high school theatre company. While the findings add to the existing research in the field, they suggest several areas for future investigation.

1. This study suggests the need for more studies of adolescents' work in drama and theatre. Specific elements that deserve further research include an investigation of the cognitive gains derived from work in drama and theatre and an exploration of ways in which value systems are formed in adolescence.
2. Further research on student production of published scripts is needed, in terms of both a critical drama pedagogy and in global education.

3. Findings suggest the need for more studies of ways in which process drama strategies and theatre programs can complement one another.

4. Further exploration of the long-term effects of participation in school-based theatre programs is warranted.

5. This study's participants were highly motivated adolescents who were deeply invested in the high school theatre program. The field needs more broadly based studies and studies of students less invested in similar programs.

6. The high school theatre program studied was a mature program that had evolved over 20 years. The program was led by teachers who had been involved with it over time, and many initial procedural difficulties had been resolved. The field needs studies of similar programs in earlier stages.

7. Findings recalled experiences of successful practices. They suggest the need for investigations of works in progress and the study of difficulties experienced along the way.

Concluding Thoughts

Alan, Luke, Nicola, and Stacy reported not only that they had experienced wide-ranging gains as adolescents through their high school theatre participation but also that the experience shaped them into the adults they are now. They credited a variety of factors with this development, mentioning the processes that we used in rehearsal and performance, the material that we chose to work on, and the community of practice of the high school theatre company itself. While this study has explored their perceptions of their development through high school theatre, it has also contributed to my understanding of the importance of research in this area. Before embarking on this study,

I did not fully understand the breadth and depth of the developmental outcomes involved or the factors contributing to them. The stories of Alan, Luke, Nicola, and Stacey have convinced me that those of us who work in high school drama and theatre need to establish our own body of theory and practice and record our own history. We need to investigate and document our practices and highlight the references and educational experiences that work for us as teachers and directors of educational theatre and for the students we teach.

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Appendix A

Research Ethics Clearance

Brock University
Office of Research Services
Research Ethics Office
St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2S 3A1
T: 905-688-5550, Ext. 3035/4876 F: 905-688-0748
www.brocku.ca

DATE: December 15, 2006

FROM: Linda Rose-Krasnor, Chair
Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Debra McLauchlan, Education
Helen Zdriluk

FILE: 06-089 ZDRILUK

TITLE: Drama in education?: A qualitative study of students' experiences in a high school theatre company

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The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above research proposal.

DECISION: Accepted as clarified.

This project has received ethics clearance for the period of December 15, 2006 to May 31, 2007 subject to full RE ratification at the Research Ethics Board's next scheduled meeting. The clearance period may be extended upor request. ***The study may now proceed.***

Please note that the Research Ethics Board (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and cleared by the REB. During the course of research no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol, recruitment, consent form may be initiated without prior written clearance from the REB. The Board must provide clearance fc any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/forms to complete the appropriate form **Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application.**

Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants and the continuation of the protocol.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organizatio it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored. A Final Report is required for all projects upon completion of the project. Researchers with projects lasting more than one year are required to submit a Continuing Review Report annually. The Office of Research Services will contact you when this form ***Continuing Review/Final Report*** is required.

Please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence.

LRK/bb

Appendix B

First Interview Schedule

1. Can you tell me about how you decided to participate in the program?
2. Can you think of any "memorable moments" in your experience in this program? What made them memorable?
3. Can you think of anything you learned (to do) through this experience?
4. Can you tell me about your personal preferences of activities? Why did you enjoy these tasks?
5. Can you tell me abut any aspects of the process that you disliked? Would you choose to do it again?
6. Can you tell me about how the experience has affected you since your high school days?
7. Can you think of a valuable lesson you took from the experience? Has the experience been valuable to you in the long term? If yes, in what way?
8. Can you think of ways the experience affected your view of yourself or of the world?
9. Can you describe the atmosphere and learning environment?
10. Can you tell me about the roles that you played and how they related to you as a person?
    a) How did you make decisions as to the motivations behind the character's actions?
11. Can you think of similarities or differences in what you learned in this experience and what you learned in classes through the process of collectively creating your own scripts?

12. Can you think of similarities or differences in what you learned in this experience and what you learned in history or English courses?
13. Can you tell me about a script/scripts that we worked on?
    a) How did your involvement with the script(s) contribute to your understanding of the world? Did the light shed on someone else's reality shed any light on your own?
    b) Did it encourage you in any way to challenge or change the rules?
14. Is there anything else I could have asked you to help me better understand your experiences? Is there anything that you would like to add to the discussion?

Appendix C

Second Interview Schedule: Alan

1. In your first interview, you mentioned that your high school theatre experience built a variety of life skills. What built these life skills–the theatre experience itself or the philosophy of the company?
2. In what way did the process help build these skills?
3. Was our process different from your experience in other theatre companies?
4. You also said that you realized there was a lot you might achieve that you might not have thought that you could have achieved before. How did that happen?
5. We talked about the material we used and the discoveries you made about the world. Do you think the experience of different cultures or different times has changed your thinking in any way?
6. How much of the value of the experience would you attribute to the material versus the process or the group?
7. You said that you were starting to use role play with your current at-risk students, and that the grade 12 drama class was also designing some exercises for them. How did those initiatives work out?
8. You also proposed the idea of interdisciplinary credits which would include dramatic arts as a component. Why do you think this would work? How do you think it would affect learning?
9. Does work in theatre encourage critical inquiry? In what way? Does it build a sense of agency?

10. What's the difference between playing a "good" character and a "bad" character? Do you connect or invest differently? Are you also affected by the characters that you don't play?
11. What parts of the process were valuable for you?

Appendix D

Second Interview Schedule: Luke

1. In your first interview, you discussed the personal change that resulted from your participation in high school theatre. What influenced you? Was it the theatre experience itself, the process and philosophy of the company, or the content and style of the script?
2. Over the years, was the experience different because of different groups of people?
3. What's the difference between playing a "good" character and an "evil" character? Do you connect or invest differently? Are you also affected by the characters that you don't play?
4. You used the word "translating" quite a few times in our initial interview, and you were talking about translating from one mode to another, from verbal language to visual language, from printed word to physical, from words to video. How did the process develop your ability to translate from one mode to another?
5. What part did aesthetic learning play for you? Does this connect to translating?
6. How important has experiential learning been to your understanding of the material? What types of things have you retained from this learning?
7. Why was your level of commitment so high?
8. Does work in theatre encourage critical inquiry? In what way? Does it build a sense of agency?
9. In your first interview, you mentioned that the intensity of the research we did turned you into a conceptual artist. In what way?

10. You also spoke about learning about different cultures. Has that changed your thinking in any way?
11. What parts of the process were valuable for you?

Appendix E

Second Interview Schedule: Nicola

1. In your first interview, you said that you'd made up your mind from the time you were in grade 7 that you wanted to be in the productions. What about the experience appealed to you?
2. You also mentioned that you eventually forced yourself past the fear of participating What were you afraid of, and how did you force yourself past the fear?
3. In your first interview, you said: "If you took away the experience that I had when I was in theatre in high school, I would be entirely different than I am now." In what ways would you be different? How do you know that?
4. What shaped the way you deal with things: the theatre experience itself, the process and philosophy of the company, or the content and style of the scripts?
5. You said that your high school theatre experience gave you the confidence to get through any situation that you encounter. In what way?
6. You explained that a major lesson for you was that if you display talent and passion in an area you would do well in it. Has that affected the rest of your life in any way?
7. In what ways did high school theatre force you to leave your comfort zone?
8. You spoke of the mind-body disconnect that occurs when you're sitting at a desk in a traditional classroom. Can you describe it and contrast it to the theatre experience that avoids it?

9. You mentioned that theatre makes you question, and teaches you that questioning is not dissident. Does it encourage critical inquiry? In what way?
10. You always played strong characters. What's the value of playing a strong character versus a weak character?
11. In working on scripts, can you describe your experiences working with various authors, different subject matter, and different forms (theatrical forms/genres and art forms)?
12. What parts of the process were valuable for you?

Appendix F

Second Interview Schedule: Stacey

1. In our first interview, you stated that you would not be the same person if you hadn't had the experience of the high school theatre company and that you developed a variety of life skills. What built these life skills–the theatre experience itself or the philosophy of the company?
2. In what way did the process help build these skills?
3. You said in your first interview that you would choose to do it again. Why?
4. In what way did the experience build a strong sense of community?
5. What part did aesthetic learning play for you?
6. What's the difference between playing a "strong" character and a "weak" character? Do you connect or invest differently?
7. In your first interview, you mentioned that all scripts can develop increased insight and understanding if you approach them in the right way. How do you approach them in the right way?
8. Does work in theatre encourage critical inquiry? In what way?
9. In what ways has the experience informed your current teaching practice or philosophy?
10. What has been more valuable for you and your students, the specific techniques learned or the high expectations?
11. What parts of the process were valuable for you?

Appendix G

Transcription Conventions

Sounds: • Affirmative sounds • Listening and encouragement	 • *yep (= yup), yeah (=ya, yah)* • *mm, mm hm*
Tone of speaker • Emphasized word	 • underline the *word*
Filler expressions • You know • Like	 • *yk* • *lk*
Demonstrative expressions • Words spoken while laughing • Laughter when not speaking • Other	 • *(laughing)* • *(he laughs), (she laughs), (they laugh)* • *(he exhales), (she sighs)*, etc.
Pauses +3 seconds	• *p.*
Self-talk or repeating what someone else said	• Use *"quotation marks"*
Repetition	• Type out repeated *words, words, words*
Punctuation • End of thought • End of phrase/clause	 • a period *(.)* at the end of the complete idea • a comma *(,)*
Tape is unclear and can't make out phrase of one speaker	• *(indistinguishable phrase)*

Note. From "Distanced Data: Transcribing Other People's Research Tapes," by S. A. Tilley and K.D. Powick, 2002. *Canadian Journal of Education, 27*(2) p. 310. Copyright 2002 by S.A. Tilley and K.D. Powick. Adapted with permission.

Appendix H

Collapsed Codes

97 original codes were collapsed to 51 codes

FINAL CODE NAME	DEFINITION	Original codes collapsed under this new name
Shapes what you do	• Produced lasting developmental change	• Lasting impact • Forms what you do "for the rest of your life"
Totality of experiences	• The complete multiyear experience • Diverse elements come together	• All coming together • Multiple connections • Integrated experiences
Life skills	• Developmental gains useful in daily life	• Coping • Presenting self • Ready for the world
Exploratory	• The exploratory approach used	• Investigative • Seeing what could happen
Those less invested	• The ability to deal with those less invested	• Others who care less
Make it work	• The learning that you keep going and make it work	• Just do it • Get on with it
An awareness of the larger world, and of history		• Insight into what things were or could have been like • Bigger worldview • Situation affecting people
Community	• The community created by the high school theatre company	• Making friends • Safe environment • Ensemble • Working with a diverse group of people
Voice	• The voice (ideas) of the individual	• Personal interpretation
Deeper understanding	• A felt, experienced, and intellectual understanding, not surface knowledge	• Doing it made you understand
Connection to character	• Identification with and understanding of the character	• Living through • Experiencing • Becoming a character

		• Into character's head • Put self in the culture
Audience	• Sharing with public audience	• Audience
Commitment	• Growing commitment to themes, ideas, group	• Became important • Commitment to the material
Authenticity	• It was real and it was valid	• Authenticity
Questioning	• The ability to question and to challenge the rules	• Compare issues to today • Learned to question how things are and why
Diversity	• Diverse students and learning approaches	• Different personal styles • Variety of people, experiences, approaches, levels
Confidence	• Courage and self-confidence	• Courage • Confidence • Belief in own possibilities • Belief in self
Process	• The way we worked	• The way we worked • How we did things
Theatrical style/artistic style/form	• The production concept and style used to interpret the show	• Style • Concept
Common goal	• Common goal	• One goal • Common goal
Energy	• The energy generated by participation in the high school theatre company	• Energy
Production tasks	• Set, costumes, props, lighting, sound, administration production elements, visual arts processes	• Set design and construction • Lighting design and realization • Costume design and coordination • Fundraising
Translate	• The process of translating information, ideas, and concepts from one cognitive mode or aesthetic medium to another	• Transform information
Analyze	• Analytical skills developed through work in the high school theatre	• Analyze

	company	
High standards	• High standards • Value of hard work	• Achieve a level • Lots of rehearsals • High level
Research	• Research for each production	• Research led to authenticity
Career competencies	• Participants currently use what they learned in their careers	• Still uses skills in career • Job skills
Larger than life	• The experience felt larger than life	• Larger than life • Big experience
Create	• Create	• Create
Evolving detail and complexities	• The growth and progression of performance and production elements	• More and more detailed • More and more complex
Themes	• Thematic content of scripts	• Deeper meaning • Themes and concepts
Activity of acting	• The physical nature of acting	• Kinesthetic learning
Strong characters	• The strong characters that participants played, both good and evil	• Strong characters
Cognitive	• Cognitive learning and mental processes	• Cognitive • Mental
Music	• The music used in productions	• Music
Social	• Learning about and through others • Learning about collaborative practices	• Interpersonal • Group work • Working with people
Used script as base	• Experimentation and decisions from starting point of script	• Script as starting point • Text launches
Control emotions	• Learned to control emotions	• Control my emotions
Self knowledge	• Learned about self through the high school theatre experience	• Learned about self • Know self better
Teacher assessment of student ability	• Teacher's opinion of student ability in traditional classes and in drama	• Teacher's opinion
Out of comfort zone	• The process forced	• Out of my comfort zone

	participants to work outside their comfort zone sometimes, and produced learning	
Backstage	• Nonperformance positions • Crew	• Backstage • Production
Fun	• The impact and importance of positive feelings	• Fun
Organize and prioritize	• Organizational skills	• Organize • Prioritize
Academic link	• The use of material and skills developed through high school theatre to improve classroom academic results	• Theatre company learning applied to classwork • Analytical skills applied to classwork • Organizational skills applied to classwork
Success through ability, work, and determination	• Learned to expect success with this formula (tied to confidence)	• Talent, passion, and pursuit lead to success
Power of telling the story	• The importance of telling someone's story	• Power of speaking words and names aloud
Importance of arts education	• Arts education is important	• Arts education is not expendable
Investigative approach to script	• Exploratory approach	• Right approach to script • Research and investigate material
Agency	• Proactive attitude	• Make a difference • Create change
Depict a concept	• Taking part in a theatre production means that one is depicting a concept bigger than just the staging of the script	• More than just the staging • Tell a bigger story